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R E M A R K S

UPON THE

HISTORY of the LIFE

O F

REGINALD POLE.

By EDWARD STONE, Clerk, A.M.

And late Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

The SECOND EDITION,

Revised, Corrected, and Enlarged.

Out of thy own Mouth will I judge thee, Thou wicked Servant.

LUKE xix. 22.

——— Videt Hunc omnis Domus, et Vicinia tota
Introrsum Turpem, Formosum Pelle decorâ.

HOR. Lib. I. Epif. xvi.

O X F O R D,

PRINTED BY W. JACKSON,

For J. FLETCHER, in the Turle; and J. FLETCHER, in
St. Paul's Church-yard, LONDON.

M.DCC.LXVI.

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TO THE
HON. AND RIGHT REVEREND
RICHARD,
LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

MY LORD,

SINCERE endeavours, however indifferently executed, to vindicate the Reformation, and the noble and reverend persons who promoted it, from the virulent invectives with which they have been aspersed by a professed Papist, and to expose the gross corruptions of the Church of Rome, are the only merits I can lay claim to; and the sole apology I can pretend to make, for taking this liberty of dedicating these Letters to your
A 2 Lordship,

Lordship, and imploring your protection of them. These, My Lord, are impertinences, which your high ecclesiastical station, your inviolable attachment to the Protestant Religion, and your well known candour and condescension to all mankind, necessarily subject you to; and which I flatter myself will be excused in me, for the sake of the Cause I have undertaken to defend: And though it deserves an infinitely better advocate, and I have fallen far short of doing it justice, yet I shall always esteem it an honour to have pleaded in its behalf; and be proud of so favourable an opportunity of subscribing myself,

Your LORDSHIP's most dutiful,

And most devoted humble Servant,

EDWARD STONE.

T H E
P R E F A C E

To the READER.

TH E S E Letters were written immediately upon the publication of the second part of the History of the Life of Reginald Pole, and printed in a common newspaper, after the manner described in the introduction prefixed to the first of them ; but that being a daily paper, it did not circulate far in the country, nor meet with so many readers, as the Author could wish, or the subject seems to require ; and many who did read them complained that their attention was too much taken off, and the thread of these Remarks too long interrupted by the interval of seven days

days between the perusal of each of them. But the principal reason which induced the Author to reprint them, was the defects in the first Edition, occasioned by an unavoidable and unforeseen avocation towards the latter end of his Epistolary Correspondence ; for having promised his Printer to send him a Letter every week, till the whole was finished, he was obliged in order to fulfil his engagement to abbreviate his Work, and leave out the greatest part of Pole's character, which rendered it extremely imperfect : He hath therefore found it necessary to supply this deficiency, by compleating his original design, with the addition of two or three Letters upon that Head, and by revising and correcting the rest. The Author doth not pretend to be much conversant in the Writings of Pole's cotemporaries, and Italian friends, or in the History of those times, except of his own Country, and other Nations so far as they are connected
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with it : but he is of opinion that Mr. Phillips may in a great measure be refuted from his own Books, as they will afford fufficient matter to an attentive examiner for condemning Him, his History, his Hero, and his Religion : But if the Reader would fee this Biographer convicted of and expofed for Plagiarifms, Anachronifms, Mifnomers, Quotations from Books he hath never read, the Adoption of the Blunders of Copiers, Slanders of his own invention or borrowed from infamous and exploded Writers, for mutilating paffages in fome Authors to make them fpeak his fentiments, and producing others as unexceptionable vouchers for facts of which they have given direct contrary testimony ; let them read two excellent Treatifes lately compofed and published, one by the Reverend Dr. *Neve*, the other by the Reverend Mr. *Ridley*, perfons of great integrity and abilities ; who by their intenfè application, and extenfive reading, have made themfelves
mafters

masters not only of the transactions at and since the Reformation, but of all Ecclesiastical History. And it hath been the peculiar felicity of the Protestant Religion, that when it hath been attacked, worthy and learned men have always rose up in its defence, and by their superior erudition have put to silence the ignorance of its petulant and malignant adversaries.

To the Printer of, &c.

IF it be not inconsistent with the plan of your paper, I shall be obliged to you if you would insert in it some Remarks or Animadversions upon the History of the Life of Cardinal Pole. They will indeed be long, and the subjects of many Letters, the first of which I have subjoined as a specimen of the rest, in which the General Heads are proposed, with the method of treating them; should you approve of them you will receive a Letter every week, about the same length, or perhaps a little longer, till the whole be finished; and as your paper is generally read, it appears to me at present the best and most publick way of answering these Books; and I cannot but flatter myself, it will be an agreeable entertainment to your readers, to see the Protestant Cause vindicated from the reflections thrown upon it by a warm Advocate of the Romish Church.

L E T T E R I.

TH E R E hath been very lately published, in two books, the History of Reginald Pole, who was second cousin, by the mother's side, to Henry the Eighth, and lived in his and the two succeeding reigns. His firm attachment to the Church of Rome, the high dignities he was promoted to in it, the part that he acted in the ever-memorable Revolutions of the Ecclesiastical state in this kingdom at those times, and his exercising the office of Legate from the See of Rome to Queen Mary, afford this author, Thomas Phillips, an ample field for displaying the doctrines of that Church, and setting before his readers as circumstantial a detail of the Reformation as best suited his purpose in decrying it.

His principal design, as appears to me from the whole scope of his history, is to extol the Romish, and inveigh against the Protestant Religion. But whatever success his vanity or bigotry may have flattered him with, it requires no extraordinary penetration to discern what it will be, both with Papists and Protestants.

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As to Papists it hath been the policy of the Church of Rome, not to suffer any of its members to be too curious in prying into its Mysteries; it hath by long experience been found, that an implicit faith, and absolute submission, are the only effectual means for preserving a profound veneration for them. For which Reasons it hath always endeavoured to keep the Laity in as much ignorance as possible; the reading, writing, and disputing upon any controverted points of Religion have by all means been discouraged, and even the Holy Scriptures themselves have not been subjected to a vulgar inspection: As this then is the case, what can our Author mean by exposing the Doctrines of His Church to publick view? Is not this tempting her sons to an illicit familiarity with them, and to assert their Right of private judgment: is it not also enhancing the difficulty of tying up their understandings and their tongues in this free country, and of maintaining that total silence and acquiescence that are required from them? Whatever testimony therefore this doughty performance may bear of its Author's zeal, yet the most sensible part of the Romish Hierachy must look

upon it as an unseasonable and injudicious Effort to serve their Cause.

Whilst they, who are of a different Communion will never be brought over by weak and fallacious arguments ; they are not to be imposed upon by specious glosses, nor borne down by dogmatical assertions, or the pretended antiquity of Doctrines which contain the grossest absurdities, and fly in the face of common sense. They cannot help indeed being offended at the bitter acrimony with which the Reformation is traduced, and they must be exasperated at the extreme prejudice which blackens the character of every Reformer, and at the blind partiality which draws every opposer of it as an Angel of Light. But with whatever indignation every sincere Protestant may resent this treatment of his Religion and its Friends, yet no one will be displeased at having the Tenets of the Church of Rome set forth by its own members ; for the subjects in dispute being thus ascertained, the objections against them may be produced with greater certainty, and matters brought to a speedy conclusion.

Since Mr. Phillips then hath given this fair opportunity of joining issue with him, let his
cause

cause be tried by a candid and strict examination ; and if, Sir, you will give me leave, I will communicate to the Publick, through the channel of your Paper, some Observations upon His History and Religion.

And that they may be digested into some order, it will be proper to begin with Remarks upon his Description of the Reformation, and a particular Discussion of the two Great Occurrences that distinguished the Reign of Henry the eighth, viz. the transferring the Supremacy of the Church from the Pope to the King ; and the dissolution of the Religious Houses in this Kingdom : Then to examine fairly and freely some of the principal Doctrines of the Church of Rome, which this Biographer hath advanced and maintained.

And lastly, to expose his prejudice and partiality, in drawing the characters of the persons he hath introduced into his books.

But before these Remarks are entered upon, it will be necessary to set before the Reader a brief account of the State of the Church of England before the Reformation.

February 5, 1765.

Your's,

CANDIDUS.

L E T T E R II.

IT is well known to all who are the least conversant in the History of England, that the Popes before the reign of Edward the first, and indeed for a long time after, considered this Kingdom as a conquered Country, and exercised their Ecclesiastical Power over it in the most despotick manner: They collated to almost all the Church Preferments, not excepting the Bishopricks and Arch-Bishopricks; most of the richest benefices were conferred on foreigners, particularly the Cardinals and their relations, who enjoyed the profits by virtue of the Pope's dispensations, without any residence upon them: Frequent Taxes were imposed on the Clergy under pretence of a Croisade; the Popes had also the first Fruits and Tenths of all the livings; the Clergy were obliged to maintain their Legates and Nuncios at a great expence, to pay them procurations, and to make large presents to them; which continually drained the kingdom of its money.

The Supremacy of the See of Rome in the Church of England was the occasion

sion of perpetual contests between the Pope and the King, and between the Ecclesiastical and Civil Magistrates ; the boundaries of their several rights could never be settled ; they both laid claim to the same things, and their powers were always interfering.

The Clergy not only insisted upon the privilege of being exempted from the cognizance of the Civil Courts and the Trial of Lay Juries, but they extended their own jurisdiction to matters purely Civil, under the pretence of there being no cause where Religion was not concerned. They were sure of being supported by the Pope, and in return they considered him as their only sovereign, and always joined with him in his encroachments upon the Prerogatives of the Crown : These were the necessary and fatal consequences of having two independent absolute heads to the same body, or what is called *Imperium in Imperio* ; the kingdom was distracted for several centuries with their mutual contentions ; the Papal Power triumphed over the Regal till the reign of Edward the first. But the usurpations of the See of Rome daily encreasing, the People grew weary of them, and the King, with the Parliament, resolved to take effectual measures

to restrain them. They began with the statute of Mortmain, which was enacted in Edward the first's time, and gave a severe check to the growing riches of the Hierarchy ; Some efforts likewise were made to deprive the Pope of his Collations to the Bishopricks in this and the succeeding reign, which were perfected by Edward the third, when the statute of Provisos took place, which cut the Pope off from all Collations to Benefices, and prohibited the Clergy, under very severe penalties, from suing for Reservations or Provisions from the Court of Rome : In this reign also the famous statute of Præmunire was passed, which forbid the carrying any causes into Foreign or Ecclesiastical Courts which belonged to the King's Courts ; the offenders against this Act were imprisoned and all their lands and goods confiscated to the King. These laws were confirmed and enlarged in several succeeding reigns.

On the other hand, the Pope and the Clergy were not idle in their own defence ; they exerted their whole strength against the civil power ; inhibitions were issued out from the Court of Rome ; the Laity who submitted to these statutes, were laid under an Interdiction, and

and when they continued obstinate were excommunicated, the King and the Parliament were sometimes included in this sentence : The Popes also proceeded so far as to assume a power of dissolving subjects from their allegiance to their Sovereigns, and obliging them to depose and murder them ; nay, some of the Popes, through the phrensy of their ambition, thought themselves invested with all Temporal as well as Spiritual Powers ; and considered Kings and Princes as vassals to the See of Rome ; one of them in particular, by his sole authority, published first a truce between the two kingdoms of England and Scotland, when they were at war with one another, and then commissioned his Legate to prescribe the terms, and proclaim a Peace between them, without the consent of either party, and against the will at least of One of them, and compelled them punctually to keep it under pain of excommunication : During these contests between the Ecclesiastical and Temporal Powers, which lasted above two hundred years, the people of England lay under the dreadful necessity of serving two Supreme Governors, whose commands were indispensable and contradictory, and consequently they lived in a perpetual

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state

state of disobedience, and were never secure either in their persons or their properties.

This was the state of the kingdom with respect to the Supremacy.

In the year 1377, which was the last of Edward the Third, Dr. John Wickliff, Rector of Lutherworth, in the diocese of Lincoln, began to preach and write against the Doctrines and Powers of the Church of Rome ; his principal subjects were Transubstantiation ; the Pope's Supremacy ; his Exercise of the Keys of Heaven and Hell above other Bishops ; the Lawfulness, and even Duty of Temporal Rulers to deprive Ecclesiasticks of their Endowments, when they made an ill use of them, or when their greatness is inconsistent with, or injurious to, the welfare of the State ; that the Holy Scriptures are a perfect Rule of Life ; that Monastick Severities are unnecessary ; that no Ecclesiastick, as such, hath power to imprison or punish offenders, either in their persons or estates.

Here was properly the beginning of the Reformation in England, or, as our Author is pleased to call it, of the Defection of one of the fairest portions of the Catholick Church ; for these Articles were publickly maintained by Wickliff, and received by all degrees of people,

people, by men of letters, and persons of quality : They were espoused by many students at Oxford, among whom were some Bohemians, who carried his doctrines into their own country, where they soon spread over great part of Europe. They were favoured likewise by the great men at Court, especially by John of Ghant, Duke of Lancaster ; and Lord Percy, Earl Marshal, who personally appeared in the behalf of Wickliff, and protected him from the prosecutions of the Pope and the Clergy. This great man, who hath indisputably the honour of being the First Protester against the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and to whom not only the Church of England but all Christendom are indebted for their Reformation, was endowed with a clear understanding and solid judgment, accompanied with a strong memory and lively imagination, which he improved by intense study and application, so that he had no equal in his time ; and indeed he became so eminent for his parts and erudition that none of the Prelates or Pillars of the Romish Church dared to write against him for fear of having their ignorance exposed, and their cause more injured by his superior learning :

He had also such an unblemished character as to his life and conversation, that his most avowed enemies never charged him with any immoralities ; even our Biographer, who went much farther out of his way to abuse Henry the second, for opposing his great Saint and Martyr Thomas a Becket, did not care to foul his pen with any slander upon this Arch Apostate.

L E T T E R III.

DR. John Wickliff died a natural death in the year 1384, but his doctrines did not die with him ; his disciples were so numerous, that even in his life-time, it was a proverbial saying, “ Two men could not be found together, without one being a Lollard or Wickliffian ;” and they continued to increase after his death ; so that in the space of four or five years, they began an actual separation from the Church of Rome, and had Priests among themselves to perform divine service, agreeable to their reformed opinions ; these pretended Schismatics or hereticks, finding themselves supported by an infinite number of friends, endeavoured to get their

their principles approved of by Parliament ; and in the year 1395, presented a remonstrance, containing twelve articles against the doctrines of the Church of Rome, to the House of Commons. Anathema's and Excommunications, the then *Ratio ultima Pontificis Romani*, were thundered out against them ; but this spiritual artillery proving ineffectual, the Clergy were resolved to make use of carnal weapons, and in the reign of Richard the second, they procured a general licence to imprison Hereticks ; this indeed was soon revoked ; but in the year 1405 they had greater success, for through their influence upon Henry the fourth, they obtained the famous sanguinary statute *De Heretico Comburendo*, which was no sooner passed but William Sawtre was apprehended and condemned by the Ecclesiastical Court for being a Lollard ; he was then delivered over to the Civil Magistrate and burnt, by virtue of a writ directed to the Mayor and Sheriffs of London : This man was the first that suffered death for Religion in England by a legal process, and stands foremost in the Protestant Martyrology of this kingdom : The civil wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster

breaking

breaking out soon after, religious disputes were in a great measure suppressed, and we hear but little of them till the reign of Henry the seventh, when they revived, and were carried on with greater heat than ever through the three succeeding reigns ; and in the fourth terminated in the total overthrow of the Papal Power, and the establishment of the Reformation.

Besides these usurpations and superstitious doctrines of the Romish Church, there was a third cause which raised great clamours against it, and this was the general depravity and corruption of the times : the church in the 14th and 15th centuries had been miserably distracted by contentions between the Pope and a General Council, between two General Councils, and between two Popes. During these schisms all discipline was lost, and spiritual wickedness prevailed in high places ; persons of the most profligate characters were advanced to the papal dignity ; they were in general illiterate, proud, ambitious, rapacious and cruel : And of one of them in particular a celebrated Roman Catholic Historian says, that he would have been the most wicked man in the world, if his bastard son had not been

been more wicked than himself : the dissolute manners of the Ecclesiasticks of all orders and degrees, of the superior and inferior, of the regular as well as secular Clergy, brought them into extreme contempt, gave infinite offence to the people, and tempted them to suspect the principles of their religion, which had no influence upon the practice of its professors.

Our Author, Mr. Phillips, acknowledges that a Reformation was necessary at these times, and that it was loudly called for by the true friends of the Church : but then he takes care to explain himself upon this head. “ It must be observed, says he, that not one of these great men, who so earnestly desired the Reformation of the Church, ever entertained a thought of changing a single Article of her Faith, or abolishing any part of her Worship ; and when turbulent and seditious spirits presumed to censure her Tenets, or dispute the Authority of her Pastors, and particularly of her chief Bishop, they rose up in defence of what an uninterrupted Tradition had delivered down to them, and looked on a breach with the Catholic Church, as the greatest of all evils. All their zeal was to correct abuses which

which had vitiated the Primitive Discipline, and recal the Piety and Purity of Manners from which Christians of all orders had universally fallen." Book I. Page 320.

The want of a Reformation is a point in which we are both agreed, and our author is very full and explicit upon it; but since his reasons for it are not so general as mine, it would not be doing justice to him, nor perhaps give equal satisfaction to the Reader, if they were not set forth in his own words; this therefore I will do in as brief a manner as the subject will permit.

" The ease and opulence, says Mr. Phillips, which the Clergy had long enjoyed, brought on those inconveniencies which always attend immoderate wealth, though lodged in consecrated hands: On whatever motives the Croisades or Holy Wars were undertaken, they had a mischievous effect on the morals of the greatest part of Europe; and the age we are now to enter on, had drained all the dregs which the absence of Bishops from their dioceses, the relaxation of canonical penitence, and the importation of foreign vices, added to the evils of war in general, had left behind them. A gloomy, unprofitable, and litigious
kind

kind of learning had taken possession of the schools which answered no purpose of Religion or Reason.

“ To these disadvantages under which Christianity then laboured, the Fifteenth Century had likewise the misfortune to see most of the Popes, during that period, altogether unworthy the supreme place they held; and their Court, instead of giving that example which the world had a right to expect from it, was infected with vices, which, like a torrent, spread themselves over all nations.

“ The scandalous traffick of the Grants of Indulgencies, was the glaring disorder of those times, and had raised such a general discontent in all orders, as endangered the Grace itself, and the Authority which conferred it, to fall into contempt. Leo X. had caused Indulgencies to be published throughout the Christian world, for all persons who contributed to the building St. Peter's Church, on which magnificent structure he was wholly intent, and towards carrying on a war he had projected against the Turk. It must be confessed, that some of the Dominican Friars laid themselves open to censure, by the exorbitant propositions they advanced concerning the

efficacy of these Pardons, and Luther was a proper person to avail himself of such an advantage ; he began by blaming the abuse, and then proceeded to condemn the thing, and to speak of the Papal Power in such a manner, as several Catholic Divines thought themselves obliged to oppose him ; this resistance irritated the haughty spirit of Luther, and he continued to make fresh Attacks on different Articles of the ancient Doctrine, and to discredit it in the minds of the people." Book I. Page 321, 322, 324.

L E T T E R I V.

THUS the Roman Catholic Divines themselves acknowledged that these Abuses had broke the peace of the Church, and been used as a pretext for an open defection from it ; they also judged it necessary to apply some remedy to these evils which they saw daily increasing upon them, but it was some time before they could agree what that remedy should be ; at last they resolved upon a General Council, which was soon after held at Trent, and, according to our Author, " was one of the most illustrious Assemblies mankind

kind had ever beheld, and met on an occasion well deserving the attention of such a Senate, viz. the Reformation of the Christian world :” But however important the end might be, the means were very inadequate, and the prescribed remedy totally unavailing ; as will plainly appear if we consider the nature of this Assembly, the temper of the Persons who composed it, the manner of their Proceeding in it, and the Effects it produced.

“ Several German Princes and States, says our Author, would have it composed not of Bishops and Priests only, as had hitherto been the practice of the Church, but of Lay Persons also. The general ignorance of the common People, with respect to Religion, and the little regard they paid to what they knew of it, disposed them to the same perverseness.” Book I. p. 326. But however presumptuous this motion was deemed, or however scornfully it was rejected, it doth not appear to have any thing in it either unreasonable or improper ; for Laymen are a part of the Church as well as the Clergy, and equally concerned in the subjects of Faith and Practice to be treated of. And there always were Persons among the Laity as much disinterested, and as well qua-

lified in all respects for restoring ancient Discipline, and correcting abuses in Religion as any of the Clerical Order ; so that there could be no reason alledged from these points, why they should not be admitted as the Representatives of the People into these Religious Assemblies ; and necessity upon this particular occasion seemed to require it, for the purposes of this Council could not be properly answered without them : Great part of the grievances which called for redress were universally acknowledged to be Oppressions which the People suffered from the Pope and the Hierachy, the Corruptions in the Court of Rome, and the enormities of the Clergy, with several other such like religious abuses : now it is an established maxim in all judicial proceedings, that no one, if it can be possibly avoided, should sit as a judge in his own cause, or where there is reason to suppose he may be prejudiced or partial to either side : according to this rule, therefore, it was very unfit for the Clergy to be the sole Arbitrators in things which purely concerned themselves, or between themselves and the Laity, or between the Pope and the Laity, because it might be reasonably presumed

presumed they would be under an undue influence in all these cases.

Our Author here acknowledges that the Clergy were too opulent, or that immoderate wealth was lodged in consecrated hands, and the Inconveniences (a very soft Term) which always attend it, were to be redressed by this Council: But were they in whose hands this consecrated wealth was lodged proper persons to redress them? Could it be expected that they would pass any such self-denying Ordinance, and destroy the Effects by removing the Cause? Or were there any Proposals made for divesting themselves of their enormous Riches, or the least Measures taken to prevent the future increase of these Inconveniences? It was indeed impossible there could be: for it is an avowed principle among the Romish Hierachy, which they never depart from, and this is strenuously insisted on by the Author of this History, that what is given to the Church cannot be taken back again. This Grievance therefore however loud it might call for Redress, could not be heard by the members who composed this Council, as ~~they~~ disclaimed all such Power, though it was pretty effectually corrected in these Kingdoms
about

about this time, by a Lay Act, or an Act of Parliament, for the suppression of the Religious Houses.

The case was the same with respect to their exactions on the Laity: there were none to remind the Clergy of them, and it was the least of their thoughts to remind themselves, for like the Pharisees of old, *They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be born, and lay them on mens shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.* Mat. xxiii. 4.

But as the scandalous Traffick in the Grant of Indulgences was the glaring disorder which hastened the calling of this Council, it might naturally be imagined that great part of their time would be engrossed in healing it. This flagrant evil gave such universal offence, that the Clergy themselves were ashamed of it; and one of them before this General Meeting, proposed a scheme for reforming it, but it was not approved of; and the expedient which was used for evading this, and every other amendment, was a notable instance of the Artifice and Chicanery of the Court of Rome: The passage in our Author which sets it forth, is too curious not to be repeated.

“ As these Innovations had began by some abuses

abuses in the Grant of Indulgences, Adrian, who was an able Divine, thought of setting forth the doctrine relating to them in such a manner as to remove whatever had given offence ; and having laid aside this design, he was advised to re-establish the use of public Penitence, as it had been practised through many ages with great profit ; but was informed by those he consulted, that the depraved state of Christianity rendered the execution of it absolutely impracticable. He complained to Soderino, his friend and confidant, of the slender disposition he found even in the Officers of his own Court, to reform several unwarrantable practices, which caused the Innovators to say, that every thing was venal at Rome. The Cardinals, who had been employed under the three last Popes, Alexander, Julius, and Leo, represented to him, that in the situation things then were, those measures, which in other circumstances might be adviseable, would then only serve to make the disturbers of the public tranquility more insolent, and heighten their credit with the people : that they would look on the intended Reformation as a concession of the abuses they had complained of ; and instead of being satisfied with what he should

should do in order to remedy evils, which length of time had never failed to introduce, would go on to demand other essential changes, and thus throw every thing into confusion." Book I. p. 327.

The Roman Catholicks held that this Council was inspired, and Mr. Phillips expressly declares, that the members were assured of a supernatural assistance at this high Tribunal : how then could there be any confusion ? or why were they afraid of this, or any other essential Change ? If the Grant of Indulgences had been scandalously perverted, this was certainly the season for rectifying it, and restoring Religion to its primitive Purity, when they were under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The refusing therefore to make this concession of abuses, which all the world exclaimed against, and these members themselves were ashamed of, was a plain indication that they did not care to trust to their boasted infallibility : They were conscious to themselves that the corruptions of their Church were so many, that if they once began there would be no end of reforming, and that the depraved state of Christianity rendered the execution of it impracticable ; for which reasons

sions they thought the shortest and surest method would be not to admit of any abuse at all. The Pope likewise was extremely tenacious of his Claims, and would not give up the least part of them ; and this unerring Assembly was aware that if they should offer to dispute any of them, he would retaliate upon the Clergy, by setting his Legates upon their Exactions ; whilst Apostates would be availing themselves of their altercations : It was therefore agreed that there should be no Inquisition, or alteration on either side, but things should continue in *statu quo*.

Thus the pretended Ends of this grand Council, which continued for eighteen years, were entirely set aside, and instead of any Reformation, all the errors that had ever been adopted into the Church were persisted in and ratified ; and the evils which length of time had never failed to introduce, were left for length of time to carry out again : The Lutherans and Calvinists were indeed highly exasperated at these proceedings, and the breach in the Church, instead of being closed, was made wider ; but the Council cared not for those things, their whole drift was to vindicate their erroneous Doctrines, to

palliate their Usurpations, and amuse their own people with some specious shew of a Reformation; for which reasons it was deservedly called a Solemn Banter upon Religion, and though our Author is grievously offended at this impious sneer, as he is pleased to term it, yet I think it would be doing this Council more justice, if it was represented as a Pompous Exhibition of Ecclesiastical Arrogance, and an infamous insult upon the common sense of the Laity.

L E T T E R V.

THE exclusion of the Laity from the Council of Trent was not only inconsistent with natural justice, but also contrary to the practice of the Church in the first Council held at Jerusalem; as may be inferred from the brief account which is given of it in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; upon which plan our Author says this general one at Trent proceeded; for there we find that Paul and Barnabas were sent by the brethren at Antioch to Jerusalem, to consult with the Apostles and Elders, whether it was needful to circumcise the Gentile Converts,

verts, and command them to keep the law of Moses: When they were assembled at Jerusalem, and there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and spoke, ver. 7; then *all the multitude* kept silence, and gave audience to Paul and Barnabas, ver. 12; after they had spoken, James delivered his opinion, ver. 13; then it pleased the Apostles and Elders, with the *whole Church*, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, and wrote letters by them after this manner: The Apostles, Elders and *Brethren* send greeting unto the *Brethren* which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia; ver. 22, 23: Though it is not expressly said that all the Christians, who were then at Jerusalem, were convened to this Assembly, yet it is implied in two or three passages, viz. when there had been much disputing, the whole multitude, *πάντες οἱ πλῆθους*, gave audience; that is the whole Body of Christians, Bishops, Presbyters, and the Laity. And again, the *whole Church*, as it stands contra-distinguished from the Apostles and Elders, must mean all the Converts to Christianity. The *Brethren* also are distinguished in the same manner; which term must include the

Lay-Brethren, because the letters which were sent to all the Gentile Converts were directed to the *Brethren*.

Mr. Phillips asserts, that St. Peter was the Prince and Chief of the Apostolic College, and presided at this meeting at Jerusalem, and that he opened it, b. i. p. 421. He produces likewise a quotation from Cardinal Pole's dissertation on General Councils, where he says, that St. Peter, as Vicegerent of the Son of GOD, exerted the office of Father of the future age, of Guardian and Pastor of the Church, in the first Council held at Jerusalem, b. iv. p. 345. But this confident assertion of Mr. Phillips is supported by no kind of argument, nor any authority of the Holy Scriptures; for in the relation of this Council there is not the least mention of St. Peter's presiding at it, or having any pre-eminence over the other Apostles; and for ought that appears, they were all upon an equality; but if there was any difference between them, or if any one was superior to the rest, it was St. James, who was Bishop of Jerusalem, and closed the debate with his Speech: And though Peter was the first of the Apostles that spoke, yet it cannot be said with any propriety

priety that he opened this Council ; for there had been much disputing before he gave his opinion.

From all which it is manifest, that this Council at Trent was constructed upon a plan far different from that at Jerusalem : the Lay-Brethren here were so far from being admitted to debate and dispute upon the subjects laid before it, that whatever orders were made it was expected they should not presume to hesitate upon or scrutinize, but to receive and obey them with an absolute submission. The Church, says Mr. Phillips, in his explication of Pole's sentiments concerning the decrees of General Councils, is not a popular state in which things are to be decided by the multitude, but a state in which the people are to assent to, and execute what is ordered by their rulers. Thus St. Paul, explaining the sum of his Embassy or Apostleship to the Hebrews, who were united to the new people of the Gentiles, and become a part of the Church, says, Obey (*Heb. xiii. 17.*) those who are placed over you, and *shew all* submission, because they are *appointed* to watch over you, as being accountable for your souls. B. i. p. 34¹.

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This text in the original Greek is as follows, Πείθεσθε τοῖς ἡγεμένοις ὑμῶν καὶ ὑπείκετε ὅτι αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀγρυπνεῖσιν ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν, ὡς λόγον ἀποδώσοντες ὅτι which is literally translated in our English Bibles; “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.” In all the Greek manuscripts which Mills and Kuster collated, there is hardly any various readings upon this text, and not one that makes the least alteration in the sense of it. I dare say, therefore, that Mr. Phillips hath no authority for his version of it, which is not only wretchedly bad, but also false in a very material part of it; and which he designedly made so to give a sanction to his present argument, without considering that he is in a Protestant country, where people have the liberty of reading the Holy Scriptures, and are not obliged to take up with what he is pleased to pass for them: There is a wide difference between *shew all submission*, and submit yourselves. It is evident that Mr. Phillips intended to prove from hence the entire subjection of the Laity, and it is as evident, that the Apostle only meant a subjection in things which are reasonable; and who
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are to judge of this reasonableness? Must it not be they who are to obey? For otherwise how are they to distinguish what they are to be subject to, and what not? Or how else can they give a reason of the hope that is in them? This then is all that St. Paul enjoins; but the Church of Rome goes infinitely farther: that requires the most abject submission. It is not as Pole or Phillips observes, a popular state, neither doth it constitute an Aristocracy; but it is the most extraordinary despotism that ever was erected, imposing a slavery more oppressive than what the wretch at the oar or in the mine is condemned to; a slavery not of the body, but of the will, conscience, and all the intellectual powers of the mind.

There is no occasion to warn Protestants from being carried away by such imperious treatment; they are not to be talked out of the use of their understandings, neither will they be borne down by round *ipse dixits*, or mere dictatorial or dogmatical assertions: No man, with his eyes open, and in broad daylight, will ever be persuaded that he cannot see, though his Holiness, with all his College of Cardinals, should magisterially pronounce
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him to be stark blind, and doom him to eternal perdition if he did not believe it.

I will therefore address myself to the Laity of the Church of Rome, and crave their attention to what I have farther to offer upon this head.

LETTER VI.

GENTLEMEN, you are rational Beings, capable of thinking, deliberating, and discoursing as well as your Clergy: they are not more, nor you less than Men; why then do you suffer yourselves to be treated as persons void of understanding, as brute creatures? who authorised them to impose this hard condition upon you, of unmanning yourselves, and tamely surrendering up your reason to them? He who endowed you with reason, expects a reasonable service from you; and nothing is more impious than to offer the sacrifice of ignorance upon the altar of the God of Wisdom: When he condescended to expostulate with the people of Israel concerning their idolatry, he appealed to their understandings, and called upon them to consider and shew themselves men. Judge for yourselves;
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do not your senses and your reason tell you, that the image you worship is a mere log of wood, as senseless inanimate matter as the residue which you have put into the fire and warmed yourselves with ? Come, says the great Jehovah to the Israelites, let us reason together : are not my ways equal ? are not your ways unequal ? Bring them to the rule of equity which I have set before you, and see which of us acts most agreeable to it. Thus God, the Fountain of Power, and to whom alone all submission is due, graciously permits, nay calls upon his creatures, whom he had formed after his own image, to reason upon his proceedings. But how different is this from the treatment you meet with from your Ecclesiastical Governors ? Do they not tell you, that you have no business to canvass, enquire, or examine into their decrees ; your whole province being to assent and obey : You are to give up your reason to these spiritual guides, to pin your faith upon their sleeves, and to be all subjection to them ; they are the physicians of your Souls, and therefore you must take their prescriptions without any scruple, and swallow their pills without chewing. This is the plain meaning of one of your Romish

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Priests,

Priests, though he expresses himself in an affectedly perplexed, and obscure stile, when speaking of the Council of Trent, he says, “ This High Court of Judicature contemplates the most sublime mysteries without being lost in their blaze : she proposes them without ambiguity, being assured to find in those to whom she speaks, a readiness to captivate their understanding to the obedience of the faith, and a strength of mind capable of supporting the weight of the divine secret.” B. i. p. 424. That is, if I understand him right, the weight of its decisions : a prodigious weight indeed ! which no strength of mind can support but what contains a mountain of Bigotry ; or in the fulness of its faith can say, *Credo quia impossibile est.*

I am sensible that your Church pretends to be infallible, your Clergy assert that it cannot err either in its Doctrines or its Practice ; should this infallibility be admitted, and that by the Church was meant the Pope with his Cardinals, or a General Council of Divines, yet this supernatural Gift would not authorize them to deprive others of the use of their reason, or destroy their right of private judgment ; and indeed they do not directly and
professedly

professedly assume this power over Protestants, but treat them with a little more ceremony than they do you of their Communion; even this Author, when he addresses himself to Protestants, vouchsafes to colour over his Doctrines with some shew of argument, as if he appealed to their understandings; but he obtrudes them with a very Magisterial Air upon his own People, as if they had no understandings to be appealed to.

But how do your spiritual rulers prove this infallibility which they lay claim to? can they demonstrate every Doctrine and Article of their Faith, or justify every Decree or Injunction which they have made? will not one single error overthrow all their pretensions? Give me leave then to point out one, from many that might be produced, of which, prejudices apart, ye are very competent judges; and as this subject properly belongs to you, and most nearly affects your practice, both your Duty and your Interest call upon you to give it a fair hearing and strict examination.

Your Church hath always acknowledged the Holy Scriptures, and especially the canonical Books of the New Testament, to be written by inspiration, and to be at least of

equal authority with any of its Decrees or Traditions. Now in the Gospel of St. *Matthew* it is written, that when Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, “ He took Bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it the Disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body; and he took the Cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying Drink ye all of it, for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins.” *Mat.* xxvi. 26, 27, 28. St. *Mark* says the same, and very nearly in the same words, *Mark* xiv. 22, 23, 24. St. *Luke*’s description of this Institution differs very little from them; as may be seen in *Luke* xxii. 19, 20. We read in the Gospel of St. *John*, c. vi. v. 53, 54, “ Jesus said unto them, (that is the Jews) verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you; whoso eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. As these words were spoken long before the institution of the Lord’s Supper, it is the general received opinion among Protestants, that they have no reference to it, and are only strong metaphorical

metaphorical expressions of the Doctrines of Christ ; but since your Church always produces them as a proof of Transubstantiation, I may take it for granted that you admit them as alluding to this Sacrament, and may use them as *Argumentum ad Romanos*. St. Paul likewise makes mention of this Sacrament, in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, x. 16. “ The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ ? and the Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ ? ” And again, chap. xi. 23, 24, 25, “ The Lord Jesus, the same night that he was betrayed, took Bread, and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you ; this do ye in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the Cup, when he had supped saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood : This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me.”

These I think are all the places in the New Testament where this Institution is fully described ; and the receiving the Cup is as expressly, and, if there be any difference, more emphatically enjoined than the Receiving the Bread :

Bread : I ask, therefore, for what reason doth your Church with-hold the Cup from you, the Laity ? Is it not directly contrary to the exprefs words of Scripture ? “ Drink ye all of this,” is a Command given by our Lord him-
 self, in the most solemn manner ; it is his last Will, which he made juſt before his death. Upon what authority then doth your Church dare to contradict it ? or upon what aſſurance doth it take upon it to declare that the obligation which our Lord hath laid upon all, doth not extend to the Laity ? This prohibition is inconſiſtent with the nature of this Sacrament, and ſubverſive of one of the fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Religion ; and what ſtill aggravates this preſumption is, that it is contrary to the conſtant practice of the Primitive Chriſtians, and a late innovation, introduced but a few centuries before the Reformation. It is amazing to me, therefore, that you, the Laity, can ſo quietly ſubmit to it, and thus paſſively diſobey ſuch an expreſs and important Command of our Saviour him-
 ſelf. It is juſtly to be queſtioned, and in my opinion a ſcruple which every conſcientious Chriſtian ought to make, whether this omiſſion in one kind, doth not only render the
 other

other ineffectual, but even offensive to the Deity; and farther, the receiving the Cup in this Sacrament, from your own interpretation of the Texts in St. *John's* Gospel, is made a Condition necessary to eternal Life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," says our Lord, "except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no life in you." This defect therefore is of extreme dangerous consequence; your Salvation is at stake, and calls upon you to consider well this Text of Holy Scripture. If this then be not an Error in your Church, I do not know what an Error is. If our Saviour is to be obeyed, if he be in the right, then your Church must be in the wrong; and if it be in the wrong in one point, it may be in a hundred; and what is still worse, when it hath once adopted an Error, during the retention of this principle of Infallibility, it will hold it fast; it may accumulate Errors, and every day gather Corruptions; but it can never get rid of them.

L E T T E R V I I .

THIS Sacrament is a positive institution of Christ. He himself administered it to his Apostles, and by his example gave them a specimen of the manner and method he would have observed in the future administration of it: how then can it be wholly received in either kind, when our Saviour hath so particularly ordered it to be received in both? and since your Clergy themselves receive it in both kinds, why are you prohibited from them? Are they not as necessary for you as for them? I do not pretend to know the motives for denying you the use of the Cup, but whatever they are the consequence is the same to you. You have wilfully violated our Saviour's ordinance; and when ye shall appear before him, and he shall ask, why did you not celebrate this my institution as I appointed? Did not I tell you absolutely, that except ye drink my blood ye have no life in you? Were not my commands as clear, positive, and full, as what were given to your first parents, when they were ordered not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and

and Evil?—What answer will ye make? will ye offer to excuse yourselves by saying, that our Priests beguiled us, and that in the Council of Trent it was unanimously decreed, “ the obligation of receiving the Eucharist in both kinds did not extend to the Laity? That in the dispensation of the Sacraments the Church had a power to establish such rites as do not affect their nature and substance? and that the Eucharist is wholly received in either kind?” Book i. p. 396. and we thought that they were to be obeyed sooner than you?—But this will but exaggerate, rather than extenuate your crimes. That you may not therefore be found speechless, or worse than speechless at this high Tribunal, let me advise you to fly as fast as you can from that Church which obliges you to live in a continual transgression of our Saviour’s express command, and in which you run so great a risque of your salvation; and join yourselves to the Church of England, where you may receive this Sacrament in both kinds, according to our Saviour Christ’s Holy Institution, and do every thing else that is necessary for your soul’s health. The visible Head of this Church is a Lay Brother, who is zealous of the liberty, wherewith his master

hath made you free ; under the protection of his auspicious government you will enjoy your birth-right, and all the privileges which your understanding entitles you to ; and in every respect ye will be honoured as rational intelligent Beings. His Clergy will embrace you as their Equals and their Brethren, will perfect you in every good work, and make you wise unto salvation. But to return to our Author.

The Reformation, says he, as it was every where termed, “ though pursued through endless changes, was so far from producing any amendment, that the morals of those who relinquished the old Religion became visibly more degenerate. And its rapid progress was soon represented by Luther, and some of his followers, as an argument of its truth, and even as a declaration of Heaven in its favour : but it soon found encouragement enough in all the passions of the mind of man, without exception, to make its success as little wonderful as its original was honourable ; though causes could not be more natural, and nothing was less requisite than a miracle to give vogue to Doctrines which coincided with all the corrupt inclinations of human nature.” B. i. pag. 330.

Is it credible, that the morals of those persons, who relinquished their old Religion, should become visibly more degenerate when their motives for relinquishing it were the total decay of Christian Piety, and the Profligacy of the Court of Rome, which, like a deluge, had spread itself over all Christendom? These Corruptions naturally led them to suspect and enquire into the Doctrines of that Church, which had either contributed to, or at least could not prevent these overflowings of Ungodliness: and from hence they proposed, by reducing their Religion to its original standard, to restore the purity and simplicity of manners which distinguished the Primitive Christians: These Reformers were so far from encouraging mens passions, or coinciding with all the corrupt inclinations of human nature, that they cut off every occasion for giving a loose to them, and laid all possible restraints upon them. They had no Pardon-mongers, nor Dealers in Licences to Sin: they did not traffick in Remission of past Offences, nor truck with Indulgences for future Crimes. They did not lead their people through the absurd round of Sin, Confess, and be Absolved; nor encouraged men to begin new

scores by wiping off the old ; their Churches were no sanctuaries to Paricides, Assassins, or atrocious Russians ; it was their opinion, that all men had fallen short of perfection, and the best were but unprofitable servants ; from whence they inferred, that no one's deficiencies could be supplied by the redundancy of another's merits. These Reformers, indeed, disapproved of unnatural vows, and retrenched unreasonable severities ; but it was an Article of their Religion, “ that Faith without good Works was dead, and even without Charity was nothing worth :” That an innocent and a virtuous life was the necessary qualification of a Christian, and that a sincere Repentance, a total Conversion of the Heart, and an actual departure from iniquity, were the indispensable terms of Salvation, for which there was no substitution, or succedaneum.

These principles of the Reformation were so consonant to the Holy Scriptures, so agreeable to the practice and discipline of the primitive Church, and to the common sense of Mankind, that nothing could be more natural than the rapidity of their progress ; and though nothing was less requisite than a Miracle to give vogue to them, yet it required something
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more than a Romish Miracle to render them unacceptable. It happened indeed at a very favourable crisis; the Christian world was just awakened from a trance, in which it had lain some hundred years, by the oppressions of the Hierarchy, and had their eyes open, when these Reformations, which recommended themselves by their self evidence, were held up to them: they were so natural and so clear, that every man was immediately struck with the sense of them, and wondered at his not being the author of them. This general acknowledgment therefore was a strong presumptive proof of their truth, and deservedly looked upon as a declaration of Heaven in their favour.

When I reflect upon the seeming inconsistency between Mr. Phillips's description of the influence of the Reformation, and the real effects it produced upon the minds of men, I cannot help thinking that I have misapprehended his meaning, and that he must take *a degeneracy in morals* in a far different sense than what I do; for I have all along supposed it to be a defection in the great duties of Morality, in Piety, Justice and Temperance, the sum and substance
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of all natural and revealed Religion. But I suspect that Mr. Phillips understands by degeneracy of morals a defection from the rules which the Church of Rome hath drawn; and by corrupt inclinations, a non-conforming temper to the orders and decisions of its spiritual Guides; for in other places of his History an implicit obedience to them is apparently his Canon of Piety, Virtue, Rectitude, Liberty, Probity, &c. Should this then be his meaning, he may possibly evade my objections; but then I must beg leave to observe, that when he uses these venerable terms in this narrow Romish sense, without explaining himself, he is playing the Jesuit with his Reader, and through the most equivocal Expressions imposing upon him a false and scandalous Character of the Reformation.

L E T T E R V I I I .

TH E next thing to be considered is the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and other Religious Houses, which was the offence that irritated Pole to fly in the face of his royal Relation, Benefactor and Patron, and to publish his book, *De Unitate Ecclesiastica* ; in which he abuses the King, and exhorts the Emperor, and other Princes of Europe, to turn their arms against him. Our Author, therefore, hath made this Dissolution a principal subject of his History, and given a prolix and circumstantial account of several particulars concerning it, in which he endeavours to justify his Hero in this part of his conduct, and draws up a virulent charge of Rapine and Sacrilege against the King, and all the Persons who were concerned in giving this fatal blow to his Religion ; “ which, he says, had made England a Theatre of as various and deep a Tragedy, as that or any other nation had ever been spectators of under the wildest and most frantic of their Tyrants.” B. i. p. 102.

Again, “ All the vigor which the spirit of destruction can give, was exerted by him who
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had assumed the Headship of the Church of England. Henry exhibited a scene of Rapacity and Sacrilege, which till then had wanted a precedent, and, for the honour of human nature, has not been copied since. An incredible treasure, which the plunder of 700 Religious Houses had brought in, being now as lavishly squandered as it was shamefully acquired; and the cravings of Avarice and other Passions, being only irritated by a perpetual condescension to them, he caused the Parliament to make over to him the Revenues, Churches, and Buildings belonging to all the Colleges, Seminaries, Chantries and Brotherhoods, throughout England, with full power to dispose of all sacred Oblations and Funds, appropriated to all such like purposes.—Of all these Donations, only the Colleges within the two Universities; those of Winchester and Eton, the Chapel of St. George at Windsor, and a few others, upon earnest application, escaped being reformed; or in other words, suppressed.” B. i. p. 336, 337, 338.

I shall not take upon me to determine upon what principle the King acted in the suppression of the Monasteries, whether it was avarice, ambition, revenge upon the Pope, anger at the Monks, or zeal for the public good;

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or whether it was a composition of some or all of them. It is likewise foreign to my purpose to consider in what manner Henry discharged the trust his Parliament had reposed in him for the application of the monies he had received from the sale of the real and personal estates belonging to these Religious Houses; or what provision he made for those he turned out of them; and for the same reason I shall pass over in silence the monstrous disorders, both moral and religious, which the Commissioners, upon their visitation, had discovered among them. It is not fair to argue against the use of things from the abuse of them, or against what might have been done from what was done. I shall therefore proceed upon a more general plan, and shall examine into the nature, purposes, uses, and effects of these establishments, and from thence shall set forth how far the dissolution of them at the Reformation, or any other time, might be justifiable or expedient; for which end, it will be proper to enquire, what number of persons these houses then contained, what their finances were, and in what manner the State was affected by them.

It is agreed by all Historians, that the lesser Monasteries suppressed, were about 376, and the number of persons they contained was about 10,000. There is some little variation concerning the greater Monasteries; but not to differ with our Author for trifles, we will take up with his account of them. “ There were, says he, about this time, 700 Religious Houses in England and Wales; (p. 213.) besides these Religious Houses, which may be looked upon as Capital Messuages, there were several lesser Tenements, such as Colleges, Churches, Hospitals, Chanteries, Free-Chapels, Guilds, and several other Foundations of the like import; the number of these establishments at the time I am speaking of, is said to have been 2734.” p. 337.

The number of persons in these Capital Messuages; or in the Lesser Tenements, is nowhere precisely ascertained; only, in general, Mr. Phillips says of the first, B. i. p. 218, that there were some Hundred Thousands of persons in them; the least, therefore, that can be supposed, is 200,000; and in the other he tells us, there was a competent number of Priests; one of which had two, another six :
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the whole therefore may be reasonably supposed, upon a very moderate computation, to be 10,000 : hence the sum total of the Religious Persons in the greater and lesser Monasteries, and other such like foundations, was at least 220,000, exclusive of the Secular or Parochial Clergy : A prodigious body of people ! and which, if it be considered how the kingdom had been lately depopulated by the long and bloody Civil Wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster, could not be less than a tenth part of its Inhabitants : and what rendered it the more alarming was, they were under the immediate protection of the Pope, considered him as their Sovereign, and always took his part against the Crown and the Civil Power. Hence the first public step that Henry took against the Monasteries, was a Representation to his Parliament ; in which he set forth, that the great number of them in the kingdom was a burden to the State, and earnestly desired them to remedy the evil by such means as they should think proper. This was a very popular plea, and adapted to the general sense of the nation, who had long since looked upon the daily increase of these Houses as a growing evil which wanted greatly to be redressed.

These Religious Persons likewise were protected, and enjoyed all the privileges and emoluments of the Community, with an exemption from the labours, services, personal attendances, and duties of it. Some mighty Benefits therefore might naturally be expected from such an immense number of Persons, with such special immunities : but what were these services ? Some of our Pious or Superstitious Ancestors, had erected large and strong Edifices, and endowed them with Lands or Estates sufficient to maintain a certain number of Priests, whose sole business should be to celebrate solemn Masses every day for the repose of the Souls of their Founders, and their deliverance out of Purgatory.

This was the original design of many of these institutions ; and these Priests were immured and sequestered from the world and all the concerns of it, that they might wholly attend upon Divine Worship in these perpetual Sanctuaries. Their principal use therefore was, not so much to the present or future Members of the Community, as to those who had been, and were gone out of it. To this principal use our Author, in vindication of these Monasteries, adds some few subordinate advantages

vantages accruing to the Publick from them, one of which indeed seems to be peculiar and essential to them; but whether it was a real advantage or not depended entirely upon the nature of the Institution itself: the other were only incidental, and might be had equally if not better without them.

“ The first, that he mentions, is the ease and conveniency which our Gentry and Nobility enjoyed, of providing for younger Children, who were disposed to retire from the world with the opportunity of study and recollection, and an establishment for life suited to the rank their families held; the charge of which was by this means lessened, and the perpetuity of their estates better secured.” pag. 219.

Now if these Foundations were a real Nuisance to the State, or if it would be infinitely better for the Society in general, or these young men in particular, to be bred up either in one of the three professions, Law, Physick, or Divinity, as now established, or employed in Merchandize or Trade, or sent into the Army or Navy, or to serve their Country in any other public or private capacity, then this disposal of them in Monasteries, would be a disadvantage

disadvantage to the Community : and this retirement from the world would be a kind of artificial death to these younger branches, and afford no other ease or conveniency to their unnatural Parents, than what their real death would give to them.

L E T T E R IX.

THE next use which this Author ascribes to these Religious Houses is, “ the Abbeyes were public Schools for Education, each of them having one or more persons set apart to instruct the Youth of the Neighbourhood, without any expence to the Parents ; and young Persons of the other Sex had the same advantage from the Convents of Women, where they were taught Needle-work, to read their Mother-Tongue, and had sometimes a tincture of the Latin.” pag. 219.

But this was not according to the original institution of Monasteries, and was voluntarily undertaken by those whose spirits were too active to submit to the indolence which their profession inclined them to ; and I do not see how these Abbies could be called publick Schools, when there was not more than one person

person out of three or four hundred, who would trouble themselves with them : As the women in the Convents could not officiate at the Altar, they were of no service to their friends in another world, and they must have been entirely lost to this, had not this employment of teaching to read and work been contrived for them : But though the Monks might be Schoolmasters, and the Nuns must be Schoolmistresses ; yet there was no necessity that Schoolmasters should be Monks, or Schoolmistresses Nuns.

It is no wonder, indeed, that among such a multitude of persons who lived in these retirements, some of them should apply themselves to Letters ; they may boast of two or three Historians, and as many natural Philosophers, but there were very few others whom the world is obliged to for any kind of literary improvements ; the generality of them confined themselves to School Divinity, or the Study of Canon Law or Ecclesiastical Constitutions ; their ignorance in most other things was so notorious as to be almost proverbial, and the few compositions which cruel time hath spared, are sufficient proofs of their extreme dullness and vitiated taste.

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It is likewise added, that these Monasteries were made the Repositories of Learning; that many Records and valuable Manuscripts were lodged in them, and that at the dissolution of these houses, many of them were lost or destroyed: probably they were, but what then? Is it any vindication of the monastick order, or any proof of its utility, that their houses were proper receptacles of books and archives?

These I think are the chief if not all the uses which this warm Advocate imputes to these Religious Houses; let us now turn ourselves to the consideration of the evils that attend them, and in the first place let me ask, whether the number of these sequestered Persons increasing by continual endowments, might not at length be disproportionable to the other parts of the Society, and demand such large draughts from the people, as to leave the residue insufficient for the exigencies of the state? Is it not possible for the swarms of labourers in this spiritual Harvest to be so large as to breed a scarcity of Hands for the temporal Harvest, or for the procurement of the necessaries and conveniencies of Life from Agriculture and Pastorage? May not Trade and Commerce languish,

languish, mechanick Arts and Manufactures be lost, for want of persons to protect and preserve them. And, lastly, might not the kingdom, from a redundancy of defenceless members, be so exhausted of its strength as to be incapable of protecting or securing itself from insurrections or invasions? These questions are so plain, that even they, who believe a purgatorial state, and the efficacy of Masses in delivering the Souls of the deceased out of it, will not hesitate to answer in the affirmative. For the same reason, likewise, it must be acknowledged, that the number of Religious Houses, for the prevention of these grievances, should be limited, or when it becomes excessive should be reduced; it is self-evident also that the power of this limitation and reduction must be vested in the State, and flows from the very principles of Self Preservation; the State likewise must be a proper judge of these numbers, for when they are an evil, it is to that alone, and not only its welfare but its very being depends upon the redress of it.

Thus far then I presume, that the Roman Catholick and the Protestant are agreed. They both will admit a possibility of an ex-

cess in these cloystered numbers, which the State is to prevent, and correct, when it happens : but they may differ widely about the number which forms this excess : the first, from his attachment to these Religionists, may think that one tenth part, or perhaps a quarter, or a half of the community might not be too much to wait upon the urgent necessities of Souls in another world, and from thence conclude that there was no occasion for any reformation in the 16th century.

But the Protestant hath no Purgatory in his Creed, or in the Articles of his Religion ; he believes that this whole Doctrine is unnatural and absurd, and that it hath no foundation in the Scriptures, or primitive Christianity, but is a recent invention, a chimera sprung from the fruitful imagination of Romish Priests, and supported by the superstitious credulity of the populace ; and therefore he concludes, that all the Masses and Prayers for Souls in Purgatory are idle and vain, and the institution of Monasteries absolutely unnecessary : With this persuasion, he looks upon the whole order of Monks and Friars as a superfluous Corps, of no kind of service to the dead, and of disservice to the living ; not only afford-
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ing no support to the State which supports them, but hanging like a dead weight upon it, and sinking it into contempt and penury. The strength of a nation is estimated more from the number of its subjects than the extent of its territories ; but then it is supposed that these subjects are effective men, jointly exerting their powers for the public good, and through their industry contributing to the increase of the common stock on which they subsist ; for should they be inactive idle persons, they are a double loss to the society, being less than cyphers, a kind of negative quantities or numbers, that tell on the contrary side ; as drones, therefore, they should be expelled from the hive, for incommoding the working Bees, and living upon their labours, without making any returns : Or, to vary the metaphor, they are in the body politick what wens, or white swellings are in the natural body, which draw the vital nourishment from every part, and by their enormous increase emaciate the whole constitution, and admit of no other cure but amputation.

Thus the Protestant is of opinion, that there is no moderating the number of Monks ; but, whether it be a tenth or a ten thousandth

part of the community, it is excessive, and that the whole tribe is the pest of Society, and a scandal to Religion and Human Nature; and from thence he thinks, that he and the Society to which he belongs, would be greatly defective in their duty to God and themselves, if they should suffer any such establishments to take place, or if they had taken place, not to exert their utmost strength for their total extirpation,

Let us suppose, for the farther illustration of this subject, a person of an enthusiastick turn believing that his soul, after its separation from the body, will be suspended in the air, and for its entertainment or repose there, to leave by his will an estate for the maintenance of three or four hundred men, on condition that they secrete themselves from the world, and spend their whole time in making soap-lather, and blowing up bubbles into the air with it; doth not this institution appear so extremely ridiculous, and the futile employment of so large a number of hands such a manifest detriment to the public, that the Rulers in whom the supreme power is lodged, would be deemed as much out of their senses as this Founder, if they did not set aside his will,

will, and apply his estate to such uses as should be judged most conducive to the common weal? But doth not every Member of the Reformed Churches firmly believe, that the donations for the relief of Souls in Purgatory are as fruitless in themselves as this legacy, and as prejudicial to the community? And do not such Prayers seem as empty Bubbles, and like them to evaporate into air: There is indeed this difference between them, one is a mere inanity, or childish amusement; but the other is something more, it is an impious mockery of the Deity, and therefore calls louder for a suppression.

L E T T E R X.

THE next objection against the monasteries is the immense riches they possessed.

Mr. Phillips says, “ that the yearly value of these places, exclusive of their moveable goods, which must have been beyond any estimate, was computed at 135,522 pounds. This income, however, great as it is, bore a much lesser proportion to the wealth of the nation than is generally imagined; the produce of
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the Lands and Possessions of England, some time before this period, had been rated at three millions; and thus what the Monasteries possessed did not exceed one twentieth part of the national Revenue; a sum much below what a design to destroy them first gave out, and Credulity hath still retained." Pag. 214.

And Credulity hath very justly retained it, if there be any truth in History; and I cannot but think, Mr. Phillips could not be ignorant that the Monasteries had much larger Incomes; for a very few pages after, speaking of the generosity of the Monks to their Tenants, he says, that the reserved Rents of these Landlords were low, and their Fines easy: pag. 222. The yearly Rents as appears from Stevens's Hist. of Taxes, pag. 215, were given in at 152,517l. 18s. 10d. but it had ever been the custom of these Houses for several political reasons, to let out their Estates upon Leases, with small reserved Rents and large Fines; and a little before their dissolution the Abbots and Priors foreseeing the impending storm, and willing to provide against it by an extraordinary supply of ready money for their future subsistence, still lowered these Rents

Rents and raised these Fines ; and from these last Leases, it is supposed, that Stevens's calculation of their yearly Rents was taken ; most of our Historians, who have treated of this subject, agree that these reserved Rents were not more than a tenth part of their real Income, which must therefore be very nearly 1,525,170 l. a year ; and this account will appear to be no ways exaggerated, if it be considered what the Estates were which only two of these Houses were endowed with : Stevens, in his History of Taxes, says, pag. 188, and 216, that the Lands belonging to the Abbey of St. Alban's are worth, at this time, about 200,000 l. a year, and those that belonged to Glassebury-Abbey above 300,000 l. a year ; so that if these Estates were at their dissolution worth but a fourth part of what they are at present, yet even then the yearly value of only two of them would not fall greatly short of what our Author makes the Income of the whole seven hundred amount to : from all which it is manifest, that if the produce of the Lands and Possessions of England, about this period, had been rated at three millions, these Religious Houses had above one half of it. But how shall we account for Mr. Phillips's

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mentioning only the reserved Rents, and dropping the Fines, which were nine parts in ten of their Income, and from thence inferring, that it was not more than a twentieth part of the national Revenue? Was not this acting the Jesuit with his Reader? He knew that fines were paid to the Monks, and he must know that they bore no inconsiderable share in their annual profits, and produces them as such for proofs of their kindness to their tenants: but he was conscious to himself, that if he did not sink them in his Account of their wealth, they would amount to such a prodigious sum, as would furnish the Reformers with a specious pretence for their suppression; for that reason he there takes no notice of them, or rather insinuates, and, in effect says, that none were received: thus, right or wrong, he is determined to make the best of his cause, and when truth doth not serve his turn, he can have recourse to falsehood, and so play the whole game; but he doth not consider, that no good can come from it in the end. A weak or a wicked defence will hurt the cause it labours to vindicate; and he that practices falsehood or deceit, always exposes his subject and himself; for he

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not only betrays the want of something better to support it, but by his Hypocrisy blackens it, and blasts his own credit.

But to return to these revenues. The State might well be jealous of the Monasteries, when they had larger possessions than the whole Legislature, viz. King, Lords, and Commons; and had more than one moiety of the lands of the kingdom, besides their moveables and personal estates, which our Author assures us was an *incredible treasure, and beyond any estimate*: And though the Statutes of Mortmain had laid some restraints upon their appropriating more lands, yet means had been contrived to evade those Acts; how else could they have accumulated such an amazing quantity of freeholds within the space of one or two centuries? But the influx of goods and money was unlimited; these were continually increasing, without controul and without end; and were then, or would soon have been, sufficient to purchase the other moiety of the kingdom, and were hoarded up for some favourable conjuncture; or till some weak Sovereign, such as Mary or James the Second, should open the way for them by removing the obstacles of Mortmain, and persuading the

Nobility and Gentry to lay up treasures in Heaven, by assigning over their estates on earth to the Church.

Every Government ought to have a watchful eye over perpetuities, of whatever kind they are; for they cause a stagnation of property, throw it into a few hands, and tend to despotism and slavery. Where the perpetuity is small, there is indeed but little or no danger to be apprehended from it; but where it is large, it becomes an alarming circumstance to the State, because it is not only a growing evil, but is continually increasing in proportion to its bulk.

In this or the preceding reign there was a great reform made in the tenure of temporal freehold estates; for the Legislature, finding great inconveniencies from perpetuities, struck at the very root of them, by suffering lay proprietors of lands to dispose of them by will or sale, and no entail was permitted to be made, but what the first Tenant, born after it was made and in possession of the entailed estate, was empowered to cut off, by observing some forms in law prescribed for that purpose: by which means there was a free circulation of property; every subject enjoyed the privileges
which

which his natural equality entitled him to : Credit was enlarged, Commerce promoted, Merit, Industry and Oeconomy met with adequate rewards, and Sloth, Luxury, and Extravagancy their proper punishments : And from this time it became an established maxim in the Courts of Justice, that the Law abhors a Perpetuity, as tending to subvert the constitution.

L E T T E R XI.

“ **A**N Act of Parliament, says Mr. Phillips, was framed to settle Rapine and Sacrilege, as Lord Herbert terms them, on the King and his heirs for ever.—It doth not appear to have been debated in either House, whether they had a power to dispossess some hundred thousand persons of their dwellings and fortunes, whom a few years before they had declared to be good subjects ; they seem to have as little considered whether some things were not above the reach of Legislature, and if a statute can unconsecrate a church, and make Sacrilege no crime. All Religions, natural and revealed, true and false, have constantly supposed Consecrations made to the

Supreme Being to be of a real and perpetual nature; the consequence of which is, that whatever is thus transferred, and, as it were, vested in them, cannot be taken back, without his consent signified to those he hath appointed Interpreters of his will, and Delegates of his power." Pag. 217, 218.

A modest person would have been very well assured of his premisses before he had drawn such a bold conclusion, as that the dissolution of the Monasteries and the alienation of their Estates were Rapine and Sacrilege; but Mr. Phillips, without the least shadow of a proof, arrogantly supposes that the Legislature had no kind of right or power over them, and upon this presumption stigmatizes the King, Lords, and Commons, for a pack of Thieves and lawless Plunderers. Both Houses of Parliament had frequently and lately debated in the most solemn manner, whether they had not a power to alter or change that course of Property which Law or Custom alone had established, and whether it was not more agreeable to the nature of Society in general, or the English Constitution in particular, to enable Tenants in Tail, or Tenants in Fee Simple, to alienate or transfer their estates, by whatever means and to
whatever

whatever persons they pleased ; and, upon the maturest deliberation they conferred this power upon them ; and no one ever disputed their authority, or branded them for Plunderers of the Public, or Robbers of Posterity. There was, therefore, very little occasion for much more consultation on this subject ; but they might very well take it for granted, that if they could impower individuals to alienate their estates, and to dispossess themselves and their families of them, where the accumulation of riches was not likely to rise to any greater grievance than to incommode the commonwealth, they must have the same power over large bodies of people, where it tended to the subversion of it ; and especially those who were setting up an independency on the state, acknowledging a different head, and were invested with an enormous quantity of wealth, sufficient to maintain these pretensions ; here their imminent dangers called for an immediate redress, and a desperate disease required a desperate cure. The Monasteries had already got possession of one half of the lands of the kingdom, and if their progress was not speedily stopped, they must soon have the other half, and then the consequence would be a total suppression

suppression of the temporal power ; the civil state would be swallowed up by the ecclesiastical, and the people must have been Vassals to the Pope and the Hierarchy.

There is nothing above the reach of the Legislature that comes within the province of Self-defence. The adjusting the boundaries of Property, instituting the several modes of its Tenure and Conveyance, and the terminating disputes concerning it, are the peculiar privileges of the civil Power, as they are necessary for the security and peace of Society. My writings are the Title to my estate, because the Laws of my Country have made them so ; but they would be no better than waste paper, if they had not the authority of the Courts of Justice stamped upon them, and were not executed according to the directions prescribed by them. And what other Title hath the Church to its Revenues ? Were not the first Grants of them made by the Legislature, or under its authority, and are not the possession of their Estates secured by it ? Deeds of Gift, Wills and Purchases, would have had no validity in them, if they had not received their sanction from the civil magistrate : and as he was originally invested with the power of
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making or allowing these Grants or Charters, so he hath continued to exercise it, by confirming and enlarging them when he thought them too little, and prohibiting their increase when he judged them sufficient: and Mr. Phillips himself can make use of this human authority, when it serves his purpose, to strengthen the Rights of the Church. This property, says he, had been assured to the Possessors by every Title on which Right can be founded, by a Prescription of many centuries, and by the repeated Acts of above thirty Parliaments. Pag. 214.

Now the prescription of many centuries is the common law of the land, and consequently their whole right was founded upon common and statute law: but these are entirely dependent on the will of the Legislators, who can continue, alter, or repeal them at pleasure. As therefore the civil power first allowed of and established these Deodands, as it afterwards confirmed, encreased and restrained them, so it must have the same authority to diminish or subtract from them, when they should prove incompatible with the welfare of the state; and one Act of Parliament can rescind, or annul,

annul, what thirty or three hundred Acts have made, or confirmed.

Mr. Phillips very dogmatically asserts, that “ all Religions, Natural and Revealed, True and False, have constantly supposed, that Consecrations made to the Supreme Being to be of a real and perpetual Nature ;” meaning, I suppose, all Gifts or Offerings to the Church or Clergy. All Religions have undoubtedly acknowledged them to be of a real, that is, of a positive and substantial Nature ; but, for my part, I know of no Religion except the Romish, that ever acknowledged them to be perpetual, or unalienable. None of the reformed Churches ever pretended to such an independency on the Civil Magistrate : the Church of England, in particular, hath in none of her Articles, Canons or Constitutions, ever maintained or supposed such a perpetuity. The Clergy hold their Benefices, and are protected in them by the Laws of the Land ; and they have constantly supposed that the Parliament hath an absolute power to change, or transfer, the Church Revenues, to suffer the Alienations of the Patronage of Livings, or prohibit, by a Statute of Mortmain, all Legacies
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of freehold Estates to any corporate, or unalienating Body, by Will; neither do I know, that they assume any right or claim, separate or distinct from the secular power.

It is a very ambiguous and equivocal expression, and could come from none but a rank Papist, that what is transferred to the Church or the Clergy, is vested in the Supreme Being. Allow Mr. Phillips this proposition, and let him put what sense he pleases upon it, which he takes for granted that you will, and he will make it an easy consequence from the nature of this investiture, that it cannot be taken back without the consent of the Supreme Being, signified by those he hath appointed Interpreters of his Will, and Delegates of his Power. Thus a Perpetuity is proved in a very concise manner: but it is too concise not to need an Explication; for if Mr. Phillips means, that whoever makes over any Lands or Goods to the use of the Church, or for the benefit of the Clergy, gives up not only his own Right and Title, but all the Power or Jurisdiction the State hath over them, and puts them directly and immediately into the hands of the Deity, who hath been pleased to signify his acceptance of them, then he is assuming the very thing

he ought to prove, and which never can be proved : but if he hath any other meaning, then his conclusion will not follow.

The Pope, I suppose, is intended for the Delegate, who is to signify the consent of the Supreme Being ; but I should be glad to be informed, how this consent is communicated to him. Did he receive any particular instructions from Heaven in Queen Mary's reign, when his Legate, under his Direction, pretended to confirm the alienation which the Parliament made in Henry the VIIIth's time ? If he did, he executed them with a very ill Grace, and most unbecoming a Plenipotentiary of the Most High, who could never commission him to deal in such equivocal expressions as implied a feigned or a forced consent. The Commons soon found, from the Pope's illusive reservations, that there was no dependence upon him ; and when a proposal was made to them for repairing and re-endowing the old Monasteries, they laid their hands upon their swords, and said, they knew how to defend their property : and therefore this scheme was then deferred till a more favourable opportunity should offer ; and every present or future Proprietor of these alienated

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Lands, will always have the greatest reason to suspect, that a favourable opportunity will offer for disputing their Titles, and ejecting them out of their Possessions, whenever the Pope shall be restored to the Supremacy of the Church, and the Plenitude of his Power in England.

But since Mr. Phillips hath mistaken the Delegate of the Supreme Being, I will endeavour to set him right, and shew him whom He hath delegated his Power to in this affair, and in what manner He hath assured them of his consent, in taking back what hath been consecrated to his Service.

L E T T E R XII.

EVERY man hath a natural Right of Self-defence; it is given him by the Deity, who invested him with it at his Creation; and on this Right the authority of the Civil Magistrate is founded. All the members of his community are his Constituents; they have commissioned him to act for them, and delegated to him their powers of Self-preservation. He is therefore their Attorney, or Representative, and derives his power immediately

from the people, and mediately, or through them, from their Creator. For this reason I apprehend the Apostle to the Gentiles says, that these rulers are of God, and ordained by him ; and whoever resisteth them, resisteth the ordinance of God. *Rom. xiii. 1, 2.* Hence their power is, strictly speaking, a *jus Divinum : vox Populi vel vox Magistratus est vox Dei !* But the right of Self-defence is a right which may be delegated, but cannot be absolutely or without a power of revocation given up, either by the People or the Magistrate, and nothing can be done which implies a total surrender of it ; hence the Parliament itself cannot create an absolute perpetuity, or an unalienable possession : neither can they suffer any one to do it under them. But whilst this principle of Self-Defence remains, the power of revocation must remain with it : *salus Populi est Suprema Lex* ; the Self-preservation of millions is the first law of nature, or of the God of nature, who hath engraven it in such deep characters in the hearts of Men, that it cannot be erased. Whenever, therefore, the state is endangered, or its interest sinking under a heavy load of Deodands, then the Supreme Being signifies by this natural law not only
his

his consent, but his orders, to the supreme Civil Magistrate whom he hath appointed in this case the sole Interpreter of his Will, and Delegate of his Power, to take them back again, and apply them to the emolument of the common-wealth. And the Princes, in every Roman Catholick country, are either ignorant of their own power, or afraid to exert it, otherwise they would take more effectual means for securing the common-wealth, and not suffer the fruits of their lands, and even their lands themselves, to be devoured by such a pitchy cloud of locusts.

Before I close this head, it will not be improper to take some notice of the Charity of these Monasteries, because our Author lays great stress upon it, and magnifies it far beyond the truth, though it doth not affect this principal objection against them.

“ An estimate, says Mr. Phillips, may be made of their Alms from the following instance : Whilst the Religious Houses subsisted, there were no provisions made by Parliament to relieve the Poor, no assessment upon the Parish for that purpose : but at present this charge on the kingdom amounts, by a low computation, to above 800,000 l. a year ; now
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if we compare the annual income 135,522 l. 18 s. 10 d. which was the appraisement of the Monastick Lands, with the Poor's Tax, we shall see what the nation hath gained by the Dissolution, nor doth the different valuation of money, in those and the present times, make any difference in the nature of the burden, as the Possessors of the Abbey-Lands would find, if this Rent-charge, which is drawn on the whole nation, was levied on them only."

Pag. 223.

In order to make out this estimate, Mr. Phillips insinuates, first, that the assessment for the Poor, by a Parliamentary Parish-rate, was a necessary consequence from the dissolution of the Monasteries. Secondly, that these Monasteries voluntarily maintained all the Poor of the kingdom: And, lastly, that the present charge of 800,000 l. was the same, or something very like it, at this dissolution.

It is very evident, that the Parish Provisions for the Poor, were no necessary consequence from the dissolution of the Monasteries, because if it had, it must have been the same in other countries where these Religious Houses underwent the same fate, and the Poor was as numerous: But there are no such provisions
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in Scotland, Ireland, Holland, or any Protestant country, except England; and even here there was no general Poor's Law enacted till the 43d year of Elizabeth, which was more than sixty years after the demolition of the Monasteries. The true state of the case, with respect to these places and the Poor, I take to be this. The Poor had anciently no other provision but voluntary Alms: and whether these Religious Orders were not so munificent as the people, or whether they imagined what was given in Charity to them, was not to be diverted to any other use, I will not take upon me to determine; but from the public transactions it looks as if the necessities of the Poor were chiefly relieved by the voluntary Alms of the Laity; for through the great engrossment of Lands by these Religious Orders, and their appropriation of Church Livings, the wealth of the Laity not being sufficient for this purpose, the Legislature, in the 15th year of Richard the Second, thought it expedient, by an Act of Parliament, to oblige these impropiators to contribute their share of Alms, and ordered their Diocesan to ascertain the Sum which every house should pay yearly, as well for the relief of the Poor in their respective

tive Parishes, as for the maintenance of the Vicar who did the Parochial Duty. They were taxed only in proportion to their possessions, and by their Bishop, who we may reasonably presume did not over-rate them; and the distribution of this Sum among their Poor was left to their own discretion; so that the only difference between them and the Laity was, they did by compulsion what these did voluntarily.

At the time of the dissolution of the Monasteries, when their possessions and impropriations of Livings went into Lay hands, this onus was not taken off, but continued till the twenty-first year of James the first, and the Poor was supported by it, and by charitable contributions as they were before; till through the increase of trade, the influx of refugees from other countries, and the taking off the embargo upon matrimony, the kingdom began, in the latter end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, to be very populous, and consequently the poor to be more numerous: Then and not till then, the Parliament, in justice both to the rich and poor, thought proper to appoint officers in every parish, whose business should be to provide materials, and set the
poor,

poor, who were able, to work upon them, and to relieve those who were unable, and impower them to raise money for these purposes, by a fair and equal assessment upon all the parishioners, in proportion to their substance.

To prove the boundless generosity of the Monks, Mr. Phillips says, that while their Houses subsisted, there were no provisions made by Parliament to relieve the poor; whereby he gives his reader to understand, that all of them were maintained by their free donations; which is notoriously false: for there was an Act passed in the 15th of Richard the Second, another in the 4th of Henry the Fourth, a third in the 39th of Henry the Sixth, and two or three in Henry the Seventh's reign, for the relief of the poor. It is true indeed that they extended only to these Religious Houses, and obliged them to aid the poor in proportion to their income; which I suppose they did, and the Laity supplied the rest: from whence it may be seen, that the nation neither got nor lost any thing in this respect by the suppression of the Monasteries, only the Mendicant trade was reduced, industry encouraged, the poor better provided for, and

the nation more equally taxed. I much question, whether the present annual charge of keeping the poor amounts to a quarter part of 800,000 l. but supposing it to be as much, why are we to compare this sum with the rents of the Abbey-lands at the Reformation? Or why doth our Author say, that the different valuation of money in those and the present times makes no difference in the nature of the burden? unless he would palm upon us the most glaring absurdity in the world, viz. that an income of 135,522 l. defrayed the annual expence of 800,000 l. How is it possible for persons of one hundred pounds a year, to bestow in alms six hundred pounds a year, unless they have the same miraculous power of multiplying loaves and fishes as our Saviour had, when he fed five thousand persons.

To conclude this head, our Author's Apology for the Monks rests entirely upon the supposition, that they freely maintained all the poor of the kingdom; for which he hath no kind of authority from history or tradition: but according to his usual method of arguing, hath presumed upon the very thing which ought principally to be proved, and hath arrogantly taken for granted what no one will allow,

allow, and what every one who is the least conversant in the annals of those times, or hath taken any pains to examine the Acts of Parliament relative to the poor, or to inform himself of their maintenance, must know to be false.

L E T T E R XIII.

AFTER what hath been said in vindication of the dissolution of the Religious Houses, from their excessive numbers and revenues, some perhaps will think it needless to add any thing more concerning them; but since there still remains a heavier charge against them, I might incur the imputation of partiality to them and to our Author, if I did not set it forth in its proper light: the charge, I mean, is the Celibacy of the Clergy, and the prohibiting the Nuns to marry.

“ About this time, says Mr. Phillips, the Queen issued out a commission, by which all the married Clergy were deprived of their benefices, as being disqualified to possess them. This inability, as extraordinary as it may now appear, was founded on the constant practice of the western church, ever since the establish-

ment of christianity, and on the unanimous authority of the canons." B. ii. p. 139.

And again ; " The example of the Apostles, the ancient usage of the whole western church, the councils and canons, had made the marriage state unlawful to the secular Clergy, and besides the obligations arising from these heads, the most solemn engagements had rendered it utterly inconsistent with the profession of the Regulars." B. ii. p. 58.

The celibacy of the Clergy was not established by the Holy Scriptures, for they in very express terms, licence them to marry. " A Bishop, saith St. Paul to Timothy, must be blameless, the husband of one wife. Let the Deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." 1 Tim. iii. 2, 12. And again in his Epistle to Titus i. 6. " Ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children."—" Have we not power, says the same Apostle to the Corinthians, to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the Brethren of the Lord and Cephas." 1 Cor. ix. 5. From this last Text it is evident, that either Paul or Barnabas,

or both, were married, and some of the Apostles. It is very probable likewise, as most of the fathers think, and our own liturgy in the form of matrimony expressly asserts, that the Apostle himself, from whom the Pope derives the power of the keys, was a married man.

All historians agree, that the Britons embraced the Christian Religion, soon after our Saviour's death, though there is a very great uncertainty concerning the person from whom they first received it. In the beginning of the fifth century, the Saxons, who were then Pagans, invaded England, got a settlement there, and at length drove all the natives into Wales. At the close of the sixth century, forty Benedictine Monks, with Austin at the head of them, were sent by Pope Gregory the First, to propagate Christianity in England; and these Missionaries had the good success to convert the Saxons, and to re-establish the Christian Religion there; but there is no mention made by any Historian, ecclesiastical or other, of a restraint upon the Clergy from marrying, either among the Britons or Saxons, for near 300 years after this conversion. The first account we have of it is in the year 970, when Dunstan, who had been
Abbot

Abbot of Glastonbury, and was promoted to the See of Canterbury, attempted, through the instigation of the Pope, to introduce celibacy among the Clergy, in the reigns of Edgar and Edward the Second and Martyr : but though this affair was vigorously prosecuted by him and the Partizans of Rome, yet it was in a great measure prevented by the Danish wars ; and the English Clergy continued in a state of Matrimony till the Norman conquest ; when Pope Gregory the Seventh became more determined than any of his Predecessors upon establishing this prohibition, and called a Council at Rome, in the reign of William the Conqueror, where a decree was made, forbidding the Clergy to marry, under very severe penalties.

It is said that the Italians, French, Spaniards, and Germans at length submitted to it, after long struggles ; but the English continued to oppose it : for which reason Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, a warm advocate for the Pope, convened a national Synod at Winchester to debate upon this subject, where he met with a strong opposition. He procured indeed a decree, which obliged the Clergy in cities to put away their wives, but it did not
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extend to country Curates : and through his influence the Synod commanded, that none for the future should be admitted into orders without a solemn declaration against Matrimony ; but even this was not strictly insisted on. Anselm, the successor of Lanfranc, both in his Bishoprick and Principles, summoned a Synod at London, which condemned the marriage of Priests ; but this did not effectually redress the pretended disorder : he would have done much more towards it, had not his contests with Henry the First, and Death, prevented him. But it was not yet every where fully established, as appears from the last Canon in the Council of Lateran, which was held in King John's reign, and decreed, that the Priests who were addicted to debauchery in countries where marriage was allowed, should be more severely punished than those who lived in places where they were obliged to celibacy. Again, long after Anselm's time, Richard, a Bishop of Litchfield, was son of Robert, Bishop of Chester. A Pope likewise about the same time complaining, that the Bishop elect of Ely was not come to Rome for his confirmation, the English Ambassador merrily replied, that the Prelate had a very
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lawful excuse taken from the Holy Scriptures, for he had just married a wife : In Baronius's Annals it appears likewise, that a Legate, sent by Pope Innocent III. into Poland to settle the celibacy of the Clergy, did at last carry his point : but attempting the same in Bohemia, he was in danger of his life. Thus, upon the whole, it is manifest, that this prohibition against Matrimony, from the first commencement of it in England, was very strongly opposed for near three hundred years, and was not fully accomplished till the middle of the thirteenth century, or in Henry the Third's reign.

I have been the longer and more particular upon this head, that I might refute and expose these daring assertions of Mr. Phillips ; and is it not amazing to see with what confidence he declares, that the prohibition of the Marriage State to the Clergy was founded upon the example of the Apostles and the constant practice or usage of the whole Western Church, ever since the establishment of Christianity, when the strenuous efforts of Dunstan, Lanfranc, Anselm, the Pope's Legates, and his Abettors for introducing and enforcing the celibacy of the Priests, and the long opposition

position it met with from the greater part of the inferior Clergy, are recorded by every English Historian that hath wrote upon the ecclesiastical Transactions of those times? This shews what little dependence there is upon the arguments which he frequently makes use of, viz. the authority of all antiquity, and the doctrines and discipline of the Primitive Church, being on his side; and how cautious his readers ought to be in admitting any proposition in his books, though delivered in the most peremptory manner, unless it be supported by some better testimony than his own.

The two great objects which the Church of Rome has always in view, are Riches and Power. For these they would compass Sea and Land; and with these keys it is easy to unlock their cabinet councils, and account for all their absurd tenets. It is impossible to conceive what prodigious sums of money that silly doctrine of a Purgatory hath brought into the Romish Clergy; and whilst it continues most profitable, it will appear most plausible to them. It might seem strange at first sight that the institution of the Celibacy of the Clergy should be most zealously espoused, and most violently persisted in by a succession of Popes

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and Cardinals ; but the wonder ceases, when we consider the effect of it ; how it cuts off from the Clergy all separate interests and connections with wives and children ; and how it tends to alienate the whole body of Ecclesiasticks from the Civil Magistrate, and attach them to their sovereign Pontiff, confining thereby all their views to the enriching and aggrandizing the Church.

L E T T E R X I V .

THE institution of Nunneries was subsequent to, and consequent from the celibacy of the Priests, for by preventing a great number of males from marrying there was of course a redundancy of females ; and therefore it was necessary either to allow polygamy to the Lay-Brethren, or to tie up a proportionable number of women from marrying by vows of chastity. This last was judged most expedient, and consequently put in execution. From hence came the religious order of Nuns, an excrescence that necessarily sprang from the institution of the Monasteries, and thus one absurdity was in labour with, and brought forth another.

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But how much soever these projects may flatter the avarice and ambition of the Church of Rome, yet they are in themselves most anti-christian, unnatural, and, I may with justice add, most inhuman. Appetites and affections are natural instincts, and implanted in us for the most useful purposes. They have indeed their proper bounds which they should not pass, and may err both in excess and defect; but the total extinction of them, or the audacious attempts towards it, are counter working the designs of divine Providence, and fighting against God; it is pretending to be wiser than infinite wisdom, and charging our omniscient Creator with having made what is superfluous or unnecessary in the human frame. When God formed man, he said it is not good for him to be alone, that is, to herd only with persons of his own sex. He is imperfect and insufficient for himself. I will therefore provide a help-mate for him, who shall be his companion, his assistant, and solace, through every stage of his being. Hence the depriving him of this help-mate is reducing him to that incomplete state he was in before his creation was finished: It is robbing his affections of their natural objects, and

estranging him from those tender sympathies which none but husbands and parents can feel or express; and without which life itself will be insipid and irksome to him. Was I not an utter enemy to persecution, and averse to every kind of violence which self-defence did not extort from me, I should think that whenever any Monks or Romish Priests were convicted of propagating these doctrines of celibacy and anti-marriage vows, in countries where they are forbidden, the punishment best adapted to their crime, would be the preventing them from any possibility of breaking their own vows, by a total excision of those parts which they have made superfluous and troublesome to them.

— *Non lex est justior illa,
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.*

The woman was made for man, for his use and service: the whole frame both of her body and mind is peculiarly formed for the breeding, nurturing and rearing of children, or for the continuation and preservation of her species. The shutting her up therefore in cloisters, and excluding her from his company for whom she was made, and from whom
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ſhe was taken, is defeating the very end of her being ; it is taking her as it were, out of her element, and rendering her abſolutely uſeleſs in her generation : and as ſhe is thus become dead to her better half, to the world in general, and all the pleaſures of it, it would be better for her if ſhe was dead to all the miſeries of it, and to herſelf in particular.

Should it be ſaid for the inhibition of marriage, that the curſe which was paſſed upon our firſt parents and their poſterity is in ſome meaſure mitigated by it ; for the Monks do not eat their bread by the ſweat of their face ; and the Nuns have not their conception multiplied upon them, they do not bring forth children in ſorrow, their deſires are not to their huſbands, neither do they rule over them. The anſwer is obvious, that this is no general mitigation of this doom ; the taking it off from one part, is only laying it the heavier upon the other : but God will not be mocked in any part, and there is no eſcaping his judgments without incurring greater. If the ground doth not bring forth thorns and thiſtles to the Monks, their minds will produce them in greater abundance, and ſlothfulneſs itſelf will prove more toiſome than
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the getting bread by their labour. The Nuns likewise will conceive and bring forth sorrow in their imaginations; despair and melancholly will rule over them, and they will appear both to themselves and to the world, the most deplorable and solitary objects in the creation.

And again, if this be avoiding the curse of God, it is also frustrating his blessing, and disobeying him in the first command he gave to mankind: for when he had created them male and female, he blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." But doth not the Church of Rome say to their Priests and their Nuns, be barren, multiply not, and depopulate the earth: And the earth indeed would be depopulated, if all were to follow their example, as all have as much right; neither is the crime the less, that all do not follow it, for they do what lays in their power towards it: And this, when duly considered, is a great deal; for the number of both sexes which these Religious Houses contained at the time of their suppression, from the lowest of Mr. Phillips's computation, as mentioned under our first head, was 220,000. To this sum must be added the number of secular

cular clergy or parochial priests, which was at least 10,000, the sum total therefore that had declared for a single life was 230,000. Now if it be supposed that these persons, from the time they made this engagement, live, one with another, or upon an average, twenty-five years, (which is setting the term very high) then it will follow, that by keeping this number continually full, 230,000 persons of them will die in that period. Let it be supposed also, that these persons had been under no restraint, but left at large, to marry or not, as inclination prompted them, then the consequence would have been that though some might not enter into this state, and some who would, might have no children, yet the others would have supplied their deficiency, and left a generation at least equal to their whole number : (for otherwise the world would have decreased in its inhabitants) and this generation in like manner begetting another, down to the present times, there must have been now existing 230,000 persons deriving their pedigree from this original stock, even supposing there had been no increase upon it.

Again, if 230,000 persons had died in the first twenty-five years, there must have been

as many taken in to have supplied their vacancies : and these in the next twenty-five years, had they the same liberty to marry, would also have had as many children, and left at this present time as numerous a posterity as the former.

And the like would have happened to every other succession. But from the general dissolution of the Monasteries, which was about the year 1539, or 1540, to the present time, is 225 years, or nine times 25 years, which would have made nine compleat successions of 230,000 persons in these Religious Houses, had they been continued as they were, and consequently the prohibition of marriage being taken off from these numbers, they have at this day as many Representatives, that is, there is an increase of nine times 230,000, or two millions and seventy thousand persons to the nation, by the demolition of the Monasteries, and leaving matrimony free to all ; and also as there hath been an increase of two hundred and thirty thousand births every twenty-five years, from the dissolution of these Monasteries to the present time, it follows that ten millions three hundred and fifty thousand births would have been prevented if these Religious Houses

Houses had been continued. A prodigious number indeed ! but prodigious as it is, it is rather set too low than too high, if our Author's account of the persons residing in these places be near the truth. With what gratitude then ought the present generation to look back upon the Reformers, when so great a share of it is indebted to them for its existence ; and who knows but even Mr. Phillips himself, may owe his Being to this very suppression, which he so bitterly exclaims against. Consider also, what mighty advantages have accrued to this nation from it : Have not all its gradual improvements in strength and riches from the Reformation down to the present times, flowed in a great measure from this continual multiplication of its inhabitants ? and is it not from the present increase of above two millions of subjects, that England makes so considerable a figure in Europe ? Doth it not from this stock supply its Fleets and its Armies, fill its Factories and Colonies in all parts of the world, and people immense territories on the continent of America, without any sensible diminution, or want of hands at home ?

But what this kingdom hath gained by the dissolution of the Monasteries, France must have

lost by the continuance of them ; for the number of them was as great there, as it was here. The addition of two millions of inhabitants, would have set this spacious and fertile country in the most flourishing condition ; and from this defect alone we may account for this northern hive not pouring forth such swarms of people as it did in the time of the Old Romans. If France was duly sensible of her barren plight, she would sit like Rachel “ weeping for her children, and refuse to be comforted, because they are not.”

The number of Priests and Nuns in all other Roman Catholick Countries, where Marriage is prohibited to them, must at the Reformation, and since, have been five times more than it was in France, and consequently there must be at this instant 10,350,000 people less in those countries, with France included, than there would have been without any prohibition of marriage ; and likewise as the number of births would have increased, had the prohibition of marriage been taken off from one million one hundred and fifty thousand persons, every twenty-five years for nine successions, or from the Reformation down to the present time, there must have been fifty-one millions

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seven hundred and fifty thousand births prevented in those places by the continuance of it : however incredible this calculation may appear, yet it is founded upon as clear and strong proofs as any proposition in Euclid.

Lastly, if to this infinite multitude which have been hindered from coming into the world, we could add the number which have been drove out of it, by the persecutions of the Romish Church, it would shew, that the countries under this establishment, have been more depopulated by it, than by all the wars, plagues, pestilences, famines, and every other judgment with which they have been afflicted, from the institution of celibacy to this present day. All mankind therefore should look upon these Religious Houses as the pests and bane of human society, and are bound, by the principles of self-preservation, to prevent and suppress them.

L E T T E R X V.

UNDER the three last heads, viz. the number, revenues, and celibacy of the Regular Clergy, some of the most material objections against their Religious Institutions have been set forth, “ a threefold cord, says the Preacher, iv. 12, is not quickly broken ;” and as each of them contains arguments sufficient of themselves to justify the suppression of the Monasteries, their strength must be proportionably increased, and rendered irrefragable by their union, by which means a principal subject of Mr. Phillips’s book is fully answered, and the vindication of His Hero, in respect to this part of his Conduct, with the heavy charge of Rapine and Sacrilege upon the Reformers, falls to the ground.

I proceed now to consider and examine the Romish Doctrines which this Author hath advanced in his History: but as it would be endless to follow him through all his errors, and entering into the whole Controversy between the Church of England and the Church of Rome ; it will be sufficient to single out those Doctrines and Positions which he hath
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enlarged upon, or endeavoured to prove by some shew of argument; and the first that offers itself to me is, the prohibiting the common people from reading the Holy Scriptures.

“ I am very sensible, says Mr. Phillips, the generality of this nation is so far prejudiced against Pacheco’s opinion (who moved in the Council of Trent, that all translations of the Scriptures into modern languages should be prohibited) as to condemn the Catholick Church for having ever with-held a full liberty on this head; but, without taking upon myself to decide on either side of the question, I shall briefly propose what may be alledged to justify this restraint. And first, in times so distant from the faith and teachable disposition of the primitive Christians, it may not perhaps be expedient to put indifferently into the hands of all the world those sacred oracles of which God has given the understanding to pure souls, and which the ignorant, according to St. Peter, wrest to their own destruction. It may be farther urged, that it is inherent to low minds to undervalue what they have always before their eyes, and to reverence what is less obvious; that the wisest nations have always removed the mysteries of religion

religion from the approaches of the vulgar ; and Jesus Christ himself, who is the wisdom of God, had so often spoke in parables to conceal from gross understandings what he designed to reveal in particular to his disciples, that in the Old and New Testament there are several passages which require great attention, knowledge and sobriety of thought, and which it were better to leave in the learned languages ; for otherwise they become a means of seduction to carnal men, who do not understand the things that are of God ; and to proud and presumptuous spirits, who imagine they understand what they are ignorant of.”
B. i. p. 356, 357.

It must be always expedient to put into the hands of all Christians, their rule of life, and what all ought to believe and practice. The Scriptures were wrote in the languages then most in use, and best understood. Moses used all prudential means to make his Statutes and his Laws as public as possible ; he commanded the people to have them in their hearts, to teach them diligently unto their children, to talk of them when they sat down in their houses, and when they walked by the way, when they laid down, and when they
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rose up; they were ordered to bind them for a sign upon their hands, to be as frontlets between their eyes, to write them upon the posts of their Houses, and on their Gates. Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8. Our Saviour himself commanded the Jews to search the Scriptures, and examine the Law and the Prophets, whether they did not testify of him? The Bereans we are told were more noble than the people of Thessalonica, because they searched the Scriptures daily, whether Jesus was not the Christ, and therefore many of them believed. Acts xvii. 11. All Scripture, saith St. Paul, is given by inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction, for righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. If Scripture then be profitable for these things, why should not all men reap these profits, and prepare themselves for good works from them? and if it be able to make me wise unto Salvation, why should I be disabled and restrained from this wisdom? Jesus Christ came down from Heaven to reveal the will of his Father to all Mankind, to publish to the world the doctrines of redemption, repentance, and forgiveness. His errand was

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to bring life and immortality to light, to set Heaven and Hell, infinite rewards and punishments, before men, and to promise eternal life to them who patiently continue in well doing, and threaten indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that obeys not the truth, and doth evil. But to what purpose are these rewards and punishments set before me, if I am kept in ignorance of the means to obtain the one, and avoid the other? or how can I obey the truth, if it be concealed from me? If the terms of salvation are proposed to me, and proposed by inspiration, they are certainly delivered in the best manner possible: they are plain, easy, and adapted to my understanding; for I can never suppose, that infinite wisdom would set things above my capacity, which are necessary for me to know, and to do; and it is a scandalous reflection of Mr. Phillips's upon the Holy Scriptures, when he says, that the study of them often betrays persons into errors, or confirms those they have already imbibed. B. ii. p. 36. For it implies, that they were written with a view to deceive more than instruct mankind; and since our Saviour hath vouchsafed to disclose the springs of eternal life, and called

called upon me to quench my thirst at them, it is my duty to inform myself what those springs contain ; and I will shew more respect to him and to myself than to take what is of such infinite concern to me from another's cistern ; but I will go as near as I can to the fountain-head, and draw these living waters from the spring itself.

The great Physician of our Souls hath given us infallible receipts for all spiritual maladies ; but they are medicines, and not charms, to be taken and digested ; for if they are laid by us, or kept in the hands of another, they will be of no more service to the sick mind than a prescription on the Apothecary's file will be to the distempers of the body. And he that thinks the Bible, which his Priest hath in his custody, will entitle him to an inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven, may as well lay claim to the whole world, because his neighbour hath a map of it in his house.

Our Saviour preached publicly : “ He that hath ears, says he, to hear, let him hear.” His Disciples were mean illiterate persons, and he suited his discourses to them. He spoke indeed sometimes in parables, but it was to the Scribes and Elders of the Jews, who were

prejudiced against him, and wanted to ensnare him in his talk : but he always explained them to his Disciples ; not to a part of them, but to all who believed in him, and kept nothing secret from them ; “ I thank thee, O Father, says he, that thou hast hid these things from the wise, and revealed them unto babes.” It by no means follows, therefore, that the people should not be permitted to read the Holy Scriptures, because Christ talked in parables to the Pharisees. There are no parables in them without their explication : the history of his life and doctrines, as recorded in the four Gospels, was wrote in the plainest style, in the vulgar tongue, submitted to the perusal of all persons, and ordered to be publicly read in all the churches. Though there may be several passages in the Old and New Testament which require great attention, knowledge and sobriety of thought, yet, what then ? Is that any reason why it should be better to leave them in the learned languages ? Do they there require less attention, or less knowledge or thought ? Is not this enhancing the difficulty and the pains to get at the sense of them ? May not carnal minds learn these languages as well as others, and will they not then prove as
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much a means of seduction as if they had been translated into the modern languages? But if there be passages requiring great attention and knowledge, then let them be commented upon by skilful persons; and by a natural solution rendered intelligible and easy to persons of all capacities.

L E T T E R X V I.

IN St. Paul's Epistles there are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do all the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction; but yet the Apostle made no exception to his readers, his Epistles were general, and to be communicated to all the members of the church they were directed to. "I charge you by the Lord, says he to the Thessalonians, that this Epistle be read to all the holy Brethren." 1 Theff. v. 27. There is no arguing against the use of a thing from the abuse of it: Our Author himself can see this in other cases, and hath observed, "that if some learned men have been justly charged with the abuse and misapplication of their talents, and other more capital disorders, these

can with no more equity be imputed to learning than the wanderings and wrecks of wilful and obstinate Pilots to the invention of the compass, and the art of navigation." B. i. p. 10. And by analogy of reason, as the use of the needle and quadrant, and the observation of the celestial luminaries, should not be prohibited to Mariners, though some have been cast away through their mismanagement of them ; so the use of the Bible, and the study of the Holy Scriptures, should be left free to all who would steer their course by them, through the waves of this world, to their desired haven in the next, though some have made shipwreck of their faith, and have perished through the perversion of them.

The great book of nature is laid open to all the world, wherein are both great and small characters, things easy, hard, and incomprehensible ; yet every man hath full liberty to look into it, to examine and make what observations he pleases upon it. Why then should not the book of Revelation be laid as open before us ? There is an absurdity in the very supposition of a revealed subject being hidden from us : It is thwarting our Saviour's intentions in his publication of the Gospel,
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and suppressing the tidings of great joy which were proclaimed by his Angel to all people. If reading the Holy Scriptures be so pernicious to the lower class of mankind as to endanger their salvation, the most effectual means to prevent it would be to hinder them from learning to read at all; and as eternal happiness is the one thing needful, and to which all other are to give way, the pursuit of it will certainly justify the prohibition of whatever interferes with or obstructs it: This perhaps the Romish Clergy would be glad to do, was it not too gross an imposition for the Laity to submit to; and indeed I am at a loss how to account for their submitting to be kept as they are in the dark with respect to the Holy Scriptures; unless custom hath the same influence over them as I have heard it hath over the inhabitants under or near the Pole, who having been inured to night half the year, would willingly have it continued the other half, and regret the return of the sun. This puts me in mind of a story which I have somewhere met with, and as it is short and pertinent to the present subject, I will take the liberty of troubling my reader with it. A Clown, seeing a fellow standing in the pillory, asked the person next
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to him, what that was in black and white on the top of the pillory? Being told it was forgery, the crime for which he was put there. Forgery, continues he, what's that? It is counterfeiting another man's hand-writing, replied his neighbour. There now, says he, this comes of your writing and reading: I thank God and my friends, for keeping me from school, and preventing this crime from hanging over my head.—When the Laity of the Church of Rome shall see those who have wrested the Holy Scriptures to their destruction assigned over to their proper punishment, they may perhaps hug themselves, and bless their spiritual guides for saving them from this danger. But should they turn themselves to the other side, and behold those faithful stewards who have learned from the Scriptures to be wise unto salvation; they will find more reason to curse their Priests for depriving them of the opportunities of improving their talents, and entering with their fellow servants into the joy of their Lord.

The absolute intrinsic worth of any thing is never increased by being concealed, and where its worth flows from its utility to mankind, it becomes the more valuable for being
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the more known : Whilst a reputed character, if it exceeds the truth, is not to be desired, and if it falls short of it, is to be contemned. If men will make a false estimation, the fault is in them, and not in the things ; and though it be inherent in low minds to undervalue what they have always before their eyes, and to reverence what is less obvious, yet we must not think of raising the imaginary value of any thing, by sinking its real use, nor mind incurring undeserved contempt, when the avoiding it eclipses native glory. The sun continues to shine, however the birds of night may be offended at it : and gold without use is no better than dross ; but it loses nothing of its intrinsic worth, and seldom any thing of its reputed value, by its general currency. Our Saviour did not secrete himself from the world to create a reverence for himself, but he went about doing good, he frequented public places, and conversed with persons of all conditions : And though his discourses and his works were undervalued, and even blasphemed by low minds, yet he did not desist from their publication. The real mysteries of Religion are above our comprehensions, and by their own nature removed from the approaches of mankind :

kind : But no wise nations ever made mysteries in true Religion, which were not such of themselves. Sacred and moral truths are not of that glow-worm nature to shine only in the dark, but like diamonds they will sparkle in the sun-shine, and be the more esteemed for being the more seen. Some crafty Politicians indeed have considered Religion only as an engine of State, and through its means have endeavoured to impose upon the credulity of the populace ? but it is the part only of weak, superstitious, or designing persons to deal in mysteries, and the offerings of the wise are infinitely more acceptable than the adoration of fools. What is there that the Priest knows which is not fit to be communicated to the People, unless it be delusion and imposture ? The Egyptian Priests kept their Gods from vulgar inspection, because they had deified the most contemptible things ; the most offensive and noxious animals, and the meanest vegetables and minerals were enshrined in their temples. The Pagan Oracles amused the people with ambiguous answers, and kept them at a distance, lest by too near an approach their impositions should be discovered, and their ignorance exposed ; and most of the Heathenish

thenish Rites, which the Adepts were initiated into, and have been since disclosed, were absurd or ridiculous, or a scandal to human nature : It is a shrewd sign that things, especially of a religious kind, are worthless in themselves, which must be beholden to ignorance for their valuation. If the Canons and Constitutions of the Church of Rome ; if the decisions of councils, and the decrees of their Italian Oracle, are consonant with the written Oracles of God, why is not their harmony displayed, and these original authorities produced, as collateral confirmations of their doctrines ? If these pure souls, who have the gift of understanding the Scriptures, don't care to submit them to the perusal of the common people, is there not great reason to suspect that they bear hard upon their ecclesiastical Institutions ? And we who are conversant in the inspired Writings know this to be the truth. They are ashamed of their unscriptural traditions, and are afraid, lest the Laity should find them contradicted by the Word of God. They have forbid the reading of the Bible, because impure souls would there see the second Commandment prohibiting, to their gross conceptions, the worshipping of Images and Relicks, as practiced in

the Church of Rome: they would also see the with-holding the cup from the Laity to be directly contrary to our Lord's institution of that Sacrament, and that no licences to sin should be granted, nor any restraints laid upon the Clergy from marrying; and lastly, they would see their High Priest brought down on a level with other Bishops, and several corruptions and abominations in their Church condemned in the Holy Scriptures.

L E T T E R XVII.

THE next subject that offers itself to our examination from this History is the Right of Private Judgment, and the Unity of the Church. "Poland, Mr. Phillips says, was so giddy with a continual Rotation, that the Synod of Scrinia came to this wild resolution, of allowing every one to believe as he thought proper." And again, "The Profelites of the new sects were allowed to be arbitrators of their own Belief; and though no pretension could be more absurd, yet it flattered their vanity, and left them at large to prophecy smooth things to every corruption of their hearts." B. i. p. 329, 331.

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However wild this resolution might appear to our Author, yet a resolution of not allowing every one to believe as he thought proper would have been infinitely more extravagant: for by what means shall he be hindered? Belief is the persuasion of the mind, founded upon conviction; and whatever a man is convinced of, that he will think most proper to believe: now how will this conviction be prevented? The mind is not the object of compulsion; there is no looking into it, nor knowing what passes there but by what comes out of it; and if there was, it is out of the reach of all external power. Thoughts are both secret and free, and every one may think as he pleases; and consequently his conviction and belief will depend upon his pleasure. This is the Prerogative of a Rational and Intelligent Being: Man was endowed with Understanding, and invested with Liberty and Free-will, on purpose that he should be master of himself, and exert these powers chiefly in things which mostly concern him, in sentiments of Piety and Gratitude to his Maker, of Justice and Benevolence to his Neighbour, and of Temperance and Moderation to himself.

The right therefore of Private Judgment, of chusing and determining for one's self in Religious and Moral Subjects, is a Natural Privilege exempt from all external violence, absolute and uncontrollable; and as we are dependent only upon ourselves, it is incumbent upon us to take care of ourselves, and to maintain this freedom, by searching into the Scriptures and using all proper means for the knowledge of the Truth, that we may establish just principles within us, and direct our conviction right. Since God hath made us men, it is our principal duty to consider and shew ourselves men, to appear the most like Reasonable Beings before the God of Reason, to assert this natural Liberty towards our fellow Creatures, and to approve ourselves to our own minds.

The Profelites of the new Sects, says our Author, were allowed to be the Arbitrators of their own Belief. It would be hard indeed if men would not allow this Arbitration to one another, which God hath given to every man, and is inseparable from him: and even supposing the Romish Church had the gift of Inspiration, and the Governors of it were infallible,

lible, yet this would not cancel or abridge the right of private Judgment, because it is an essential property flowing from our understanding, and cannot be taken from us without destroying our very nature. He who is the Fountain of Infallibility and Power, and conferred this right upon us, doth not offer to withdraw or suspend it, when he himself condescends to converse or expostulate with us ; but he expects us to assert it, and even appeals to human Arbitration for the Justice of his proceedings with mankind.

If therefore any Members of the Church of Rome be Infallible, they should prove their Infallibility, not by attempting impossibilities, but by adapting themselves to the capacities of their inferiors, and by laying before them such clear demonstrations of knowledge, and strong arguments for conviction, as would overpower their judgment, and force their assent. This is the only violence that can be offered to rational minds, and is consistent with their natural privileges. But no pretension can be more absurd than for fallible and frail mortals to claim more power than what the Almighty hath thought fit to take upon himself ; and surely nothing can be more presumptuous than
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for men to deny their Fellow Creatures their Rights of Thinking, Reasoning, or Judging, and to engross them to themselves. And lastly every man must be proud of being delivered from the tyranny of such Usurpers, restored to the free exercise of the Powers which God hath invested him with, and left accountable to him alone for the hard or smooth things he might prophecy to himself from them.

Since then it cannot be supposed, that the Synod of Scrinia should only intend to allow what was out of their power to refuse, the resolution they came to must be, to tolerate a public profession of every one's belief. And where was the wildness of this resolution? If every one had a power to believe for himself, why should any one be debarred from the declaration of his faith? The free communication of our thoughts to one another, is the best method of mutual instruction; this is the proper use of speech; and the natural right of believing for ourselves, entitles us to the application of all the means of perfecting this belief: and as this is the one thing needful, we may, nay we ought to converse, confer, and argue upon points of faith and practice, in season and out of season; with the learned,

ed, and with the unlearned ; and it is incumbent upon all, to be aiding and assisting each other with their informations on these subjects. Did not our Saviour appeal to mens senses and understandings, with the proofs of his divine mission ? Did he not suppose the right of private judgment, when he preached to persons of all conditions, and endeavoured to satisfy them of the truth of his Doctrines ? Though he had all power given him, in heaven and in earth, yet he did not pretend to be the arbitrator of any man's faith, without convincing his judgment ; neither did he deny the privilege of believing as every one thought proper ; but by the power of his wisdom he brought them to believe as he thought proper, and by speaking as never man spake, and with arguments that no one could answer, he compelled their assent, and drew all men after him. In like manner, the Apostles addressed themselves to mens understandings : Their loins were girt about with truth, and they had on the breast-plate of righteousness : None were able to resist the wisdom of St. Stephen, nor the spirit by which he spake : And when St. Paul made Felix tremble, it was by the force of his reasoning upon righteousness, temperance, and judgment

to come. The Christian Religion made its way in the world by the purity of its doctrines, and the simplicity of the manners of its professors. And how do even the present Missionaries of the Church of Rome propagate their Religion among the infidel nations, when they are not armed by the secular power ? Or how did their famous Jesuit or Saint, Francis Xavier, convert the Indians in the East ; or their Missionary and Saint, Lewis Bertrand, enlighten the Indians in the West ? Was it not by laying before them the plainest truths of the Gospel, such as are suited to the lowest capacities, and endeavouring to convince them from the first principles of morality of the errors of their ways, and of the truth of the Christian Religion ? and had they had nothing more to communicate to them they might have safely rested their cause here, and could not have failed of success ; but as they built upon this foundation, hay and stubble, or the traditionary rubbish of their Church, they found it necessary to have recourse to artificial expedients, and attempted to betray the Indians into a belief of their Doctrines by false miracles, yet still this was an appeal to their senses : and these missionaries were obliged to
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open the eyes of those people by the natural light which was still retained, because they were destitute of all compulsive power. Force therefore was impracticable, and would it not have been a most preposterous method of making profelites, to have told them that they were a pack of blockheads and fools, without sense or understanding; that they must not be talked to as men, but drove like brute creatures into the church, and there must believe whatever their Priest should dictate to them, and do whatever he should command them? These would have been such gross insults upon the common sense of mankind, that the most barbarous nations would have spurned at such rude treatment: Men are not to be stript of their reason at once; it must be craftily and gradually taken from them. They, who have any such design, should take vice for their example; they should first make use of reason itself, and gently lead it on from one infatuation to another: Men must not be let into these profound secrets till they are prepared for their admission, and are become adepts fit to be initiated into the mysteries of their Religion. It was therefore most impolitic in our Author, and nothing but his zeal can excuse

his temerity, in divulging these private articles to a free people, who are extremely zealous of their natural rights : and surely no Protestant in his senses will ever be prevailed upon to quit his Religion, when he must lose his understanding by the change, surrender up the use of his judgment, extinguish the light of his mind, and blindly follow spiritual guides more blind than himself.

L E T T E R XVIII.

THE Pretence of the Romish Hierarchy for disallowing private Judgment, and exacting an implicit Faith in, and an unlimited Obedience to all their decrees is, the Unity of the Church.

“ The Christian Faith, says Mr. Phillips, which has the source of truth for its Author, partakes of the unity of its Divine Origin, which cannot be divided, and that any discord would be the destruction of the whole. And again, the members of her own Communion will, above all others, find motives of acquiescence in the guidance of a church which they perceive to be still the same, amidst all those changes which surround and pass before her, that

that her unerring light is at once clear, unchanged, and universal, and has in every age imparted the rules of belief and action to all who have any claim to a succession from the Apostles, and been the source and test of every rightful tenet, that, like the soul which feeds the whole frame with spirits, supplies it with vigour, directs each motion, and sustains every nerve; this divine direction has provided not only nations and provinces, but individuals, with spiritual supplies suited to all their necessities." B. i. p. 422, 423.

Every Protestant acknowledges a perfect rule of faith and practice, as well as the Papists; the difference between them is, the first asserts the Holy Scriptures to be that rule, and the other supposes it to be framed in a great measure by his church, which he believes to be continually inspired by the Holy Spirit and directed into all truth.

The uncertainty among the Romanists themselves where to place this infallibility is a demonstration of there being none; for if there was any, it would soon manifest itself, and among the most fallible creatures would immediately distinguish those who were endowed with it. The contrary decrees of their Coun-

cils, and their Popes, and the palpable errors adopted by their Church, are undeniable proofs of its fallibility. But waving this consideration at present, and supposing, if it could be, that both Churches have a perfect rule, with the source of truth for its Author, it would most certainly partake of the unity of its divine origin, and any discord in it would be the destruction of the whole; that is, if there was any inconsistency in it, it could not be a perfect rule. And it also follows that all men ought to submit to, and walk by, this perfect rule. But the question still returns, How shall they be brought to this submission? Is there any other way than by instruction, persuasion and conviction? Christ, who was both Omniscient and Omnipotent, prescribed only this, and perhaps it is impossible to use any other consistently with the liberty of a Rational Being. But this was far from being sufficient to procure, or preserve, an uniformity of opinions, for from the different tempers, inclinations, infirmities and corruptions of mankind, there could not but be an infinite diversity of sentiments, and endless deviations from this perfect rule. I hear, saith St. Paul to the Corinthians, that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe

believe it, for there must be heresies among you ; that is, it cannot be otherwise, it is impossible in the nature of things to prevent them ; and though our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Primitive Fathers, never attempted to bring men to one mind but by convincing their judgments, yet contrary to all these examples, and to the impossibility of the thing itself, the Church of Rome hath undertaken by other methods to compass this unity of opinion : in the first place they set themselves up as the arbitrator's of every man's faith, and came to a resolution of not suffering any one to have any judgment of his own, or to believe as he thought proper : then they published canons or rules of faith, and under the severest penalties extorted an outward profession of them ; but here their power ended, they could go no farther towards destroying private judgments, they could not reach the heart, nor establish any faith there. They might therefore bring men to dissemble their thoughts and make them hypocrites, but they did not make them christians : external Religion might by this means become a subject not of choice but of compulsion, and every person was in some manner obliged to take what was prescribed him, but this was
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not properly his own, it was the Religion of his Country ; and for the same reason that he professed Christianity, he would have professed the Jewish, Mahometan, or Pagan Religion, had either of them been thus forcibly established where he was born. But though the Church of Rome could not bring men to think or judge as they would have them, yet they brought them not to think or judge at all ; for their restraint upon the tongue cut off all the means of information ; and as discourse upon religious topicks was extremely dangerous, it became at length a general maxim among all ranks of people, not to trouble themselves with, or to have any thoughts concerning it. Thus the Church prevented a diversity of opinions by leaving none, and instead of bringing all men to one mind, they suppressed all minds : the very life and soul of Religion was destroyed, and nothing remained but the bare profession, the mere outside tinsel shew, and the glittering pomp and pageantry of it.

The means likewise which they used were no less unnatural and anti-christian than ineffectual, for preserving unity of opinion. “ The members of her Communion, says our Author, will

will above all others find motives of acquiescence in the guidance of a church which they perceive to be still the same." They will find indeed motives of acquiescence with their church which are not in any other; motives from dungeons, inquisitions, racks, tortures, fire, and all the direst cruelties that desperate revenge or malice can furnish incensed avarice and ambition with. Motives of acquiescence which operate, not as Circe's wand did, by a charm upon the companions of Ulysses; but by terrors, such as Erynnis ne'er could raise, nor fear conceive. Men were deprived of the use of their understandings; which they could not but despair of ever recovering, as they perceived their church always pressing these motives with the same unrelenting fury. Herein was our Saviour's prophecy verified, when he said, think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword. He preached indeed the Gospel of peace, and his principal errand was to reconcile God to Men, and men to one another; and to establish the doctrines of universal benevolence. The distinguishing characteristic of his disciples, was love; they were not to resist their adversaries, but rather

to turn their cheeks to the smiter ; and instead of putting a sword into the hands of the Defenders of the Faith, he came to put meekness, forbearance and forgiveness into their hearts, and to order that no difference in opinions should make any breach in their affections. But he knew, that in after ages some men would set themselves up as his vicegerents, and others as the successors of his apostles, who would change his spiritual into a temporal kingdom, and transform his whole scheme of benevolence into a plan for monopolizing wealth and power, and aggrandizing themselves. He saw with the eye of prophecy his pretended vicars come forth with power and signs, with lying wonders and all the deceiverableness of unrighteousness ; having mystery wrote in their foreheads, and a cup in their hands, full of abominations. He saw them drunk with the blood of the saints ; and under colour of peopling heaven, making the earth desolate ; his prophetic spirit set before him holy leagues giving sanction to the most horrid massacres ; and croisades undertaken for the recovery of the Holy Land : he saw an order of Knights-errant fighting under his banners ; who were sworn enemies to peace,

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and had vowed perpetual war with infidels, he saw likewise another religious order of men professing the simplicity of the Gospel, and under the veil of his Holy Name practising all kinds of dissimulation, perfidy, and cunning craftiness to deceive ; struck with these monstrous sights, he declared that the Prince of Peace was come to send a sword upon earth : and if a judgment was to be formed of Christianity from these propagators of it, it must be inferred, that a spirit of persecution was the spirit of his religion ; that his injunctions, like Draco's laws, were wrote in blood, and not with ink ; that malevolence to all, but most especially to one another, was the mark of his disciples, who appeared to breathe nothing but threatnings and slaughter, and to be sent to destroy mens lives, and not to save them.

L E T T E R X I X.

THOUGH violence was absolutely necessary for the preservation of the unity of the Romish Church, and the whole polity of that Ecclesiastical State was founded upon it; and though it hath been constantly practised in every country, where this hath been the established Religion, and for its sake alone, for many centuries; yet our author hath the assurance to declare, that his church never made any use of it, and that her punishments extend no farther than to the spiritual state of the offender. The facts indeed in Queen Mary's reign, and during the time that Pole was Legate and Archbishop, were too glaring to be denied: but he endeavours to palliate them, and to throw them entirely off from the church upon the state. "The bishops, he says, were men of great moderation, and averse to such measures, except Bonner, and a very few more: some leading persons about the court seem to have countenanced these measures, as necessary to secure the government: Philip's behaviour afterwards in the Low Countries, where the Duke of Alva
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by his orders put such numbers to death, make it not improbable, that he favoured proceedings which for political reasons he would be thought to disapprove ; as for the Queen, no one will wonder that her fondness for a husband twelve years younger than herself, and her attachment, not only to his person but his family, from which she was descended by her mother, should cause her to assent to what he was inclined to ; something likewise must be given to the times." b. ii. p. 165, 166.

The Queen, Gardiner, Bonner, and the greater part of the Ministry, were furious bigots, all principals, and nearly equally concerned in these violent proceedings : But when they found them to be exceedingly unpopular, and that the nation in general was disgusted at them, every one denied that he was the author of them, and endeavoured to shift them off from himself upon the others. Our author acknowledges, that there were 270 persons burnt for heresy, during this reign : But the least number that all our Historians mention is 284 ; and some of them assert, that there were no less than 800 who underwent this fiery trial. Our author's account of the persons burnt in the dioceses of York, Wells,

Exeter, Lincoln, Peterborough, Ely, Bristol, Salisbury, Oxford, Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford, and in the four Welch dioceses, is copied from Heylin ; but there is not the least authority, that I can find, for his saying, that not one was put to death in the diocese of Canterbury, after Cardinal Pole was promoted to that see ; and I here call upon him to produce his authority for it ; for it is generally agreed, that the persecution, after Cranmer's death, chiefly raged in Bonner's diocese and in Kent : And Fox assures us, that five persons were burnt for heresy, in the city of Canterbury, about a week before the Queen's death. It is allowed also, on all hands, that the Queen herself was of a gloomy and zealous temper, and was doubtless the principal cause of all these flaming measures, which Mr. Phillips here seems to allow, and endeavours to apologize for ; yet in the character which he gives of her afterwards, he says, that she was far from a sanguinary disposition, and would have been worthy of the highest commendations, had as few acts of cruelty been done under her reign as were done by her. B. ii. p. 209. though they could not be done without her approbation, and were chiefly done by her

her special order and commission. And farther to extenuate these cruelties, he adds, they neither began nor ended with this Princess : But far from retaliating this objection on her successor, who made actions of mere religious import, treason and felony, and punished those who performed them accordingly ; I would choose to treat this subject in such a manner, as to cover heats, not spread and perpetuate them, p. 166. And well he may choose it, when he cannot but be sensible, that this is no season for him to blow up flames, and that his cause must be greatly prejudiced by being involved in such an unequal comparison ; for there were not above two or three persons who suffered death upon account of religion in Edward the Sixth's time ; and even these must be attributed more to the rage of an exasperated party, than to the principles of the Reformation, which disclaims all violence. And Queen Elizabeth took direct contrary measures to what her Sister had done, in that long and peaceable reign ; her subjects were gently led into the Church of England ; the house of God was filled, not by compulsion, but by persuasion and argument. The Protestant Religion was established with no other constraint,

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than by obliging the Clergy to quit their Benefices, who would not conform to the new Liturgy; and by punishing those malecontents, who fomented sedition and insurrections in the State, according to the nature of their crimes, with as much lenity as the order and security of the Kingdom would permit. When therefore the reign of Mary stands so remarkably distinguished for its fires and faggots, between the two mild and pacifick reigns of Edward and Elizabeth, is it any wonder, that our fathers, and our father's fathers, have transmitted to us, or that we should deliver down to our children the bloody reign of Queen Mary? or that it should continue, to the latest posterity, to be the dismal ditty of every nursery? Well therefore might Mr. Phillips be willing to draw a veil over it, and to wave the consideration of these facts, by putting the issue of his cause upon speculative points; but here he will meet with no better success.

I must ask the reader's leave, says he, to add a few reflections, which will elucidate the state of the question, and belong to this part of Cardinal Pole's History no less than the facts themselves. I have already shewn, that what
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gave occasion to enact penal laws against heretics in former reigns, and to renew them in this, was the open rebellion against the government to which this licentiousness of opinions gave birth, as well as to the manifest subversion of the Catholick Doctrine, p. 166.

It is very manifest indeed, that the allowing every Christian the free use of his Bible, to judge for himself, and to make a public profession of his faith, would subvert the Roman Catholick Doctrine ; but it is very far from being manifest, that this Liberty, which our Author is pleased to stigmatize with the opprobrious name of licentiousness, gave birth to open rebellion against the government.

There is nothing in the nature of the Christian Religion, as professed by the Protestants, that hath the least tendency to stir up faction, or rebellion in the State ; and in general, long experience hath confirmed to them this political maxim concerning Religion, that the only effectual way of maintaining the peace and prosperity of the kingdom is, a free toleration for all persons to choose and profess whatever Religious Doctrines they think proper, provided they are not inconsistent with the fundamental principles of society,

or the civil Rights and Liberties of its Members : and Protestantism in particular strengthens the natural obligations of humanity, and distinguishes its Disciples for the most peaceable and useful subjects. We are commanded by our rule of Faith, to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake, and to look upon the Civil Magistrate as the Minister of GOD to us for good, and a Revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil ; wherefore we must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake ; and as the behaviour of the primitive Christians was exactly conformable to these precepts, so might the Protestants, as Protestants, both before and in the days of Queen Mary, have pleaded with St. Paul, " that they were no movers of sedition, nor found to raise up the people, but only in the way which is called Heresy ; so worship they the God of their Fathers, believing all things in the law, and in the Gospel."

L E T T E R XX.

IT is well known that the Bishops and Clergy were the first contrivers and promoters of the penal laws against Hereticks ; they had set their hearts upon them, and were resolved to leave no stone unturned to carry them ; and as they were an exceeding large body of people, possessed of half the lands of the kingdom, granted their subsidies to the King, and had their Representatives in Parliament, they could not but have a mighty influence upon the Legislators, which they never ceased to exert with all their power. The first violent statute against Hereticks, in Richard the Second's reign, was enacted by their interest alone ; and Henry the Fourth, wanting some favour from the Clergy, passed that famous, or rather infamous Statute, "*De Heretico comburendo*," purely to ingratiate himself with them, who were not to be satisfied without it, and were more importunate with him for burning Wickliffians, than the Jews were for crucifying Jesus Christ, with Pontius Pilate : so that though these statutes were the laws of the Realm, they were properly the acts of the

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Hierarchy, who were the primary and efficient causes of them. The Civil Magistrates were no other than their instruments, whom they used as their Cats-Paw, not to take things out, but to ^{put} them into the fire; and when their ends were answered, they left the Magistrates to bear the whole charge of persecution, and with a most Jesuitical evasion, denied that they had any hand in it.—“ This Licentiousness, says our Author, caused the Legislature to consider Heresy not only as a grievous sin against Almighty God, but as a heinous crime against the State; and as the cognizance of it belonged to the Church, Bishops were required to examine those who were accused of it, and if they were found guilty, to deliver them over to the secular power; but it must be observed, that these Statutes are Laws of the English Realm, not Canons of the Catholick Church, and no more make part of her Faith and Discipline, than the hardships Debtors undergo in our common goals, or the same punishment being assigned to murder, and to the larceny of five shillings can be imputed to the Church of England.” B. ii. p. 167.

Though these sanguinary laws were never made but in Roman Catholic countries, and there

there only where the Clergy bore the chiefeſt ſway, yet ſuch is their gratitude to the temporal Magiſtrate, that when he hath done, or rather been compelled to do, their dirty work for them, they accuſed and pelted him for it; and the compariſon which our Author makes uſe of between Hereſy, and Debts or Larceny, is very improper and unfair, for he allows Hereſy to be a fit ſubject for an Episcopap Inquiſition; the whole proceſs is of an eccleſiaſtical nature, the imprifonment likewise of the Heretick, with his other Punishments, makes a part of the diſcipline of the Church of Rome, and therefore they have a very cloſe connection with it; but Debts or Larcenies are purely temporal cauſes, wholly appropriated to the civil Courts, and conſequently have no kind of relation to, or connection with, the Church of England.

Again, the Catholick Church, he ſays, is ſo far from adjudging Hereticks to corporal puniſhment, much leſs to death, that all her criminal proceedings againſt ſuch as are accuſed of Hereſy ceaſe, when the cauſe is cleared up; and her puniſhments extend no farther than the ſpiritual ſtate of the offender. I ſhall exemplify this in as ſolemn an inſtance of the Church's Jurisdiction as the caſe admits, and exerted by a

Pope as zealous of his prerogative as ever filled the Pontifical Throne; this was Paul the IVth, who in his decree of Cranmer's condemnation, which is directed to Philip and Mary, only requires them to deal with him after he is delivered to the secular court as the law directs. B. ii. p. 167.

Mr. Phillips may assert what he pleases, or what he thinks will best make for his cause, but he will never convince any Protestant, that violence and persecution make no part of the faith and discipline of the Church of Rome; and I believe no Layman, even of that communion, will have the assurance to join with our Author in declaring, that the Catholic Church is far from adjudging Hereticks to corporal punishment. Have not their chief pontiff, and the whole college of Cardinals, with the concurrence of all their Clergy, set up an inquisition in every country where it was in their power? Is not this an entire ecclesiastical court, under the sole or principal direction of the Pope? Perhaps our author may quibble upon the word adjudging, but if the inquisitors do not adjudge, they do what is worse, they put Hereticks without judgment to corporal punishments, and such exquisite punishments

as the most furious bigots have tortured their imaginations to invent, and steeled their hearts to inflict. The whole process of that iniquitous court seems to be founded upon maxims directly contrary to all the rules of natural justice: the criminal neither knows his accusers nor his accusations; he is punished before he is proved guilty; he is forced to accuse himself; and to extricate himself from the extreme misery which he suffers from this force, he frequently confesses crimes which he never committed; and from this extorted confession is delivered over to other tormentors to be burnt to death.

The ecclesiastical state was the center of persecution, there the Pope, armed with all the terrors of the Inquisition, suffered no apostate to touch that holy ground with impunity; and when Luther, or any other suspected Heretick was summoned to Rome, to answer the charge laid against him, he saw "*vestigia nulla retrorsum*," and too well knew in what manner his cause would be cleared up by that court, to venture himself within the precincts of it. This Paul IV. who in his condemnation of Cranmer, is said to proceed no farther than to his spiritual state, was, from our author's

thor's own account, one of the most cruel tyrants that ever sat upon the Pontifical Throne ; when he was Cardinal, he was placed at the head of the Inquisition, where he exercised severities with inextinguishable fury ; and when he was made Pope, the prisons were continually crouded with miserable wretches of all sorts, and the barbarity which his mind had been long inured to, did not leave him when he was leaving the world ; for he spent his last moments in a recommendatory panegyrick upon the inquisition : the jurisdiction of his church was indeed sufficiently exemplified by the decree of this Pope against Cranmer, which commanded Philip and Mary to deal with him as the law directs, for he knew full well what that was, and also that they would not, and dared not disobey his mandate. The Pope seldom failed to inflict all kinds of corporal punishments which were in his power ; and where they were out of it, he made what use he could of the Civil Magistrate for that purpose, whose orders or instructions were generally unlimited for the extirpation of heresy ; and an absolute obedience to the Pope was the principal and necessary qualification of his ministers : This appears
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from the resolutions of Sadolet, Bishop of Carpentras, whom Mr. Phillips produces as an extraordinary instance of moderation ; and moderate indeed he was, when considered as a Papist, but of a narrow and uncharitable spirit, when considered as a Christian ; for when the Pope had sent him a commission to seek after and punish the Lutherans, he thought himself greatly honoured by this singular mark of his Holiness's favour, and was determined to put it into execution : only he proposed to try first what a mild aspect, with persuasion, would do, but where these failed, he would then put on a countenance armed with terror, and proceed to the application of racks and gibbets, p. 301.

Though Mr. Phillips says, that the ecclesiastical proceedings were extended no farther than to the spiritual state of the offender, yet if it be considered what he underwent, even in countries where there was no inquisition, and before he was delivered over to the civil Magistrate, he will be found to be not a little affected in his temporal circumstances ; for upon slight information, he was apprehended, loaded with irons and cast into a dismal dungeon, when he could sue out no writ of Habeas

beas Corpus to be admitted to bail, or to hasten his trial; but he was kept in durance at the will of the Bishop, or ecclesiastical judge; and half of such prisoners languished and died from the noisome stenchs of their cells, and their long and close confinement in them; and when the other half were tried and found guilty, the ecclesiastical sentence extended to the confiscation of all their real and personal estates, which was always put in execution before the spiritual rulers parted with the criminal out of their hands.

Mr. Phillips closes his arguments for the clemency of his Church with the speech which the bishop, or officer, who delivers the delinquent over to the civil Magistrate, concludes the proceedings of his court, viz. we beseech you with all earnestness, that for the love of Almighty God, and on the motive of compassion, and because we ask it of you, that you will not condemn this miserable person to death, or the loss of his limbs, B. ii. p. 167. What a solemn farce is this! and what an ample proof of the dissimulation and perfidy of the Church of Rome? which, after it had inflicted upon their convict all the severities which lay in their power, and given him to
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the temporal officer, on purpose that the rigour of that fiery statute, “ *De Heretico comburendo*,” which they were the authors of, should be executed upon him, they insult over him with a feigned petition for compassion : thus their tender mercies are cruel ; and woe be to those protestants who fall into their hands, and have no other dependence for their deliverance, but these insidious prayers of their ecclesiastical judges, who weep for their prisoner with the tears of the crocodile, the emblem of superstition ; who is said to cry over his prey before he devours it.

L E T T E R X X I.

HAVING treated at large of the prejudices and violences of the Papists against the Protestants, I will now proceed to consider their Credulity and Superstition, and more particularly of our Author, with respect to the doctrines of their own Church.

Speaking of the Mysteries of Religion, he saith, “ Though they are proposed to our understanding with all the evidence of light and truth, they must always be the object of faith rather than knowledge, as being little conso-

nant to reason, and to the experience of our senses." And again, in the same page: "The sacred obscurity in which the Eucharist is veiled, was particularly marked out (*that is by the sectaries*) as an imposition on human reason, and the doctrines concerning it were brought down to the test of our senses." B. i. p. 331.

If the Mysteries of Religion be proposed to my understanding, and yet are not consonant to my reason, or to the experience of my senses, they cannot possibly be the object of my faith; for how can I believe that to be, which is contrary to my understanding, and which my reason assures me cannot be? Faith is a rational conviction, and that belief which is not founded upon reason is not faith, but a thoughtless credulity, or a feigned assent: but this whole subject of Faith and Credulity may be set in the clearest light, by a comparison of Natural with Religious Mysteries. Let it be supposed then, that Kepler, or Sir Isaac Newton, or any celebrated Astronomer, should declare that all the primary planets move in elliptical orbits, having one common focus where the Sun is placed, and that the law of their tendency to it is reciprocally as the squares of their distances from it. I perfectly understand

understand what an elliptical orbit, its focus, and this centripetal law are : but not being an adept in Astronomical Studies, I am no competent judge how far these things are applicable to the sun and planets. These Declarations, therefore, are mysteries to me ; but though they are above my understanding they are not contrary to it. I see no absurdity in them, and they may for ought I know be true. The Sun indeed appears to move, and so do the shores, and all things upon them, when I am sailing in a ship at sea. If then this earth on which I stand be itself a moving object, the sun, stars, and all detached objects, will, I am sensible, from the nature of vision, seem to recede from, or approach to me, just in the same manner as if they had been moving, and I had been placed upon a fixed object. This objection therefore vanishes, and this earth may, for ought that appears, be moving in its orbit ; and upon considering how much more commodious it is for it to turn round its own axis in twenty four hours, than for the immense body of the sun to run such prodigious lengths in so small a time, it seems to me most probable that it doth so ; and if it hath a diurnal, why not an annual motion ?

Hence the more I enquire into these Astronomical Paradoxes, or Mysteries, the less difficulties they seem to labour with.

This then being the state of these things, with respect to my understanding, my faith from these principles alone is in suspense : but when I consider what character these Astronomers have for their skill in this science, how universally their declarations are received, and especially by all those who I have the greatest reason to think are judges of their demonstrations ; how exactly they predict Lunar and Solar Eclipses, with the return of Comets, and how well they account for all other phenomena of the heavenly bodies ; then these testimonies turn the balance, and incline me to believe them. Thus these natural mysteries which are proposed to my understanding, appear consonant to it, and to the experience of my senses, whence my faith is founded upon a rational conviction, and I should offend against the greater light if I with-held my assent from them.

But should any Mathematician assert, that the three angles of a triangle are more or less than two right angles, from the little knowledge I have in Geometry, this would be no
mystery

mystery to me, nor any object of my faith, because it is dissonant to, and an imposition upon my reason ; for I have as clear an idea of its falsity as I can have of the plainest truths.

Again, whoever dogmatically affirms, that sugar is bitter, snow black, or brandy a solid substance, proposes things contrary to the experience of my senses, which are the proper and sole judges of them. These therefore are no mysteries : they are impudent insults upon my senses ; my taste, my sight, my touch tell me they are false ; and it might with as much propriety be said, that I have neither reason nor senses, as to contradict these manifest reports of them.

From these natural mysteries let us now turn to religious mysteries : The resurrection of the body, a future judgment, the rewards of the righteous, and the punishments of the wicked in another life, are doctrines of revelation ; they are proposed to my understanding, and I know what they mean ; but how, or where, or when they will be, are above my comprehension ; the particular circumstances of all these things are mysteries to me ; they are not dissonant, nor contrary to my reason, which by itself is almost in the dark, and neutral
upon

upon these points ; but there is no apparent impossibility to destroy, nor improbability to detract from the testimonies of the revealer. My faith therefore rests upon the external and internal proofs of his divine mission, and if these are satisfactory and perfect, my conviction is just, and my faith is rational.

But when it is confidently asserted, that the same corporeal substance, is in two or many different places at the same time, or that the same Elements are this minute Bread and Wine, and the next are hocus-pocus'd into Flesh and Blood, without the least sensible change of the elements themselves. That is such a flat contradiction to my reason, and this such a gross imposition upon my senses, that I know they cannot be true : here are no obscurities, no mysteries ; I have as clear an idea, and am as fully assured that the same body cannot be in different places at the same time, as that two and two do not make five : and the Church of Rome may as well insist upon my believing that the sun doth not shine at mid day, and that this obscurity ought not to be brought down to the test of my sight, as that which is proved to be Bread and Wine, by the experience of all my senses, is the Body
and

and Blood of a person who was killed seventeen hundred years ago.

These I take to be the true distinctions between what is above, and what is dissonant to my reason ; and between what is a mystery and a contradiction ; or what is an object of Faith, of Credulity, and of feigned assent : and as these are too clear to need any farther explication, I will hasten to other points of our Author's credulity, which are the Miracles his Church pretends to perform. I will not take upon me to determine, neither will I enter into the dispute, when the powers of working miracles ceased in the Christian Church ; all that I shall attempt to shew is, that we have no satisfactory proofs of any supernatural works done either since, or at the time, or for some centuries before the Reformation.

America, says Mr. Phillips, was enlightened by the labours and miracles of St. Lewis Bertrand : and St. Francis Xavier shewed the spirit and wonders of an Apostle in the East-Indies, B. i. p. 429. And again, there was at Canterbury a celebrated monastery of St. Austin, by whose Preaching, Labours and Miracles, our Saxon Ancestors had received the benefit of Christianity, and by a quotation from

Bosluet

Bossuet, he says, that it hath pleased the wisdom of the Almighty to declare in the favour of the cause of St. Thomas Becket, by wonders which were so frequent and so well attested by the unanimous agreement of all authors of those times, that they cannot be contested, without calling in question whatever history hath transmitted to us, B. i. p. 225, 227.

I cannot find in any authentick memoirs of Austin, or his fellow Missionaries, that any particular miracles were wrought by them in their conversion of the Anglo-Saxons: I am likewise a stranger to the records in the Romish Legends of the wonders which Bertrand or Xavier did in their travels through the eastern and western regions of the world: but most of the miracles, which were attributed to the reliques of Thomas Becket were of the same kind with the recovery of the Dauphin's health, when his father, Lewis VII. of France, offered up his supplications for him at Becket's tomb; the physicians who had been consulted in this case, and applied their medicines, had doubtless some pretensions to this cure; and after all it was very uncertain whether nature or strength of constitution did not contribute more
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to it than either the physick of the one, or the prayers of the other.

L E T T E R XXII.

BUT since the Romish Church still claims this power of working miracles, they have the present manifestation of it to offer for a confirmation of the above-mentioned facts, and the conviction of Protestants; who object that all these miracles were done before the most ignorant and credulous people, who might be easily imposed upon by false and designing Missionaries: unbelievers likewise are very apt to say that if Thomas Becket could protect them who venerated his remains, and avert injuries from them, why could he not defend the remains themselves from ravagers, and chastize them for their insolence? or why should not the same virtue continue after their removal in the place where they had been for a long time deposited? or why should such power be given into the hands of sacrilegious wretches as to break these charms with impunity, and put a total stop to all these miracles, only by burning a few bones and scattering their ashes in the wind? These are fair questions and deserve

a serious answer, and as truth will bear the strictest examination, and rejoices in the light, why do not the Romanists refute the gainsayings of their adversaries by a full display of their miracles; if therefore they will now heal diseases, make the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and raise the dead to life in as publick a manner as our Saviour and his Apostles did, they will find no perverseness nor hardness of heart among the Protestants, the greater part of whom are competent judges of supernatural gifts, are capable of distinguishing true from false miracles, and where they find them, are most open to conviction, so that the most expeditious and surest way of reconciling them to their Church would be by these manifest demonstrations of their power: but if they refuse to exhibit publicly such necessary proofs of it before them, and only perform their wonders in dark or distant places, or before such persons as dare not or will not dispute them, then the Protestant will be strengthened in his defection from the Romish Religion, and his suspicions of a fraud in the pretended miracles of their present or former Saints.

Again, the members of the Church of Rome are not more assuming of these supernatural
powers

powers than they are superstitious in their constructions of divine judgments. Though the righteous in this promiscuous state are frequently involved in the same calamities with the wicked, and though in most cases it is impossible to know whether the dispensations of the Almighty are in judgment or in mercy, yet men of all persuasions, but most remarkably of the Romish Communion, are so presuming upon the goodness of their cause, as to engross providence to themselves: they are strangely apt to suppose, that all the proceedings of the most High are directed to their service, and consequently interpret them either as special favours to them, or as signal judgments upon their opposers. There are numerous instances of this kind in Mr. Phillips's History; some of which it will not be improper to lay before the reader, as specimens of his bigotry and superstition.

He begins with Cardinal Wolsey, who had the Pope's decree for the suppression of some religious houses, for the founding of two colleges; yet he, and all that were concerned in it, our author says, were observed to be remarkably unfortunate, the Pope himself not excepted; and as to the two foundations in

favour of which the monasteries were suppressed, the college at Ipswich became a ruin almost before it was built, and the other at Oxford was never finished, B. i. p. 27.

Speaking of Ann Bullen's death, he saith, her fate was considered not merely as a punishment, but as a divine judgment. P. 124. Mr. Phillips and many of the Papists might consider it as such, but there was nothing in it to distinguish it for a divine judgment, more than was in the first Catharine's divorce, or the other Catharine's similar fate, or the execution of Fisher and More.

Again, " The complicated and national guilt which was incurred by dissolving them, that is, the Religious Houses, hath induced some to look on these calamities which trod on the heels of this iniquity, as so many indications of a provoked and avenging God : of a hundred families of note and fortune which were in the county of Norfolk before the dissolution all that had enriched themselves by these spoils of sacrilege, were either extinct or much impaired in Sir Henry Spelman's time." P. 224.

As the monasteries were possessed of more than half the lands of the kingdom; we may
suppose

suppose that half of the families of distinction were enriched by them. How can our author then be so prejudiced against Norfolk as to confine his judgments to that county? Why doth he single that out and sacrifice it to the divine displeasure, when the rest of the nation were equally guilty in making those purchases, some of which have continued in the same families to this day; and I don't find that they bear a less value, or sell for a less price than any other estates in the kingdom, notwithstanding the curses which our author or his Church hath entailed upon them, or the judgments which he asserts trod upon the heels of, or followed at any distance from, this alienation. But the anger of heaven it seems, exercised on the nobility a still severer vengeance than in permitting their possessions to moulder away, and their families to fall; more of that class having been attainted and died by the hands of the executioner within twenty years after the dissolution, than during the preceding five hundred. P. 224.

The suppression of the lesser Monasteries was in the year 1536, and of the greater in 1539; since which times Cromwell was the only Peer of the Reformed who was executed
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in that reign, the others of that class who suffered were rank Papists, and principal opposers of this dissolution ; so that our Author here gives a fair opportunity of retaliating judgments upon them for this opposition. The Duke of Somerset and his brother, were the only two of the Nobility who were put to death in Edward the Sixth's Reign. Lady Jane Gray with some of her relations were beheaded in the beginning of Queen Mary's Reign ; and afterwards there were four Bishops burnt for what the furious zealots of the Church of Rome called Heresy, whom I suppose Mr. Phillips reckons as instruments in the hands of the Almighty for inflicting his Judgments upon these apostates. The confining the Divine Judgments to Bills of Attainder, is so weak and superstitious a suggestion, that it would be ridiculous to enter into any particular discussion of it, therefore I shall only make this general remark, that he was obliged to limit his judgments to executions upon the scaffold ; for there were twice as many of the Nobility who fell by the sword, and came to untimely ends in the Reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV. and during the short Regency and Reign of Richard III. than there were in a century

century after the dissolution of the monasteries. But this dissolution, it seems, was such an unparalleled and unpardonable a crime, that the very day which gave commencement to it, as our author observes, was thought a hundred years after to be ominous ; for on the meeting of the long Parliament, from which the Church of England dates her misfortunes, several persons, almost as superstitious as Mr. Phillips, entreated Archbishop Laud to move the King to have it adjourned for a short time ; it being the same day on which the Legislature in Henry the Eighth's Reign began the dissolution of Religious Houses, which was the 3d of November, 1640 ; from which our author seems to imply, that such an adjournment might have prevented all the subsequent evils. P. 224. The 5th day of the same month hath likewise proved as ominous to the Roman Catholicks, as the 3d was to the Monasteries ; so that these two days should be expunged for ever out of their calendar, and nothing should be done upon them.

Another remarkable instance of our author's bigotry and superstition is, his observation upon the building of Somerset House, on the ruins of the deanry and close of Westminster, of the
parish

parish Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of three episcopal houses, with some others : this pile of sacrilege, he says, was reared in the very year that England was afflicted with a pestilence, that swept away thousands. B. i. p. 444 ; and he might with as much reason have added, that in less than the space of one hundred and twenty years after this sacrilegious building, London was visited with a plague, which carried off some ten thousands, and the whole city was almost consumed by fire. But these applications of divine judgments are so manifestly absurd, that the bare mentioning of them will be a sufficient refutation. I shall therefore conclude this head with a brief recital of two or three superstitious anecdotes of our author, viz. B. ii. p. 1. Nature put an end to the life of Edward the Sixth, the 6th of July 1553, which was observed to be the same day of the same month that his father had put Sir Thomas More to death.

Again, an incident happened, which was remarked by every one there present, and interpreted as a declaration of heaven in his favour, and which, in whatever light it may now be looked on by the reader, I must not omit ; the wind, which for several days had been

been so contrary as to make the passage to England impracticable, and seemed as if it would continue so, on the very night of the Legate's arrival, became on a sudden fair, and in a few hours conveyed him and his retinue to Dover. B. ii. p. 77.

And lastly, the third day after his arrival, Cardinal Pole went to Court, where the King delivered into his hands a packet of letters he had just then received. It was a dispatch from Rome, and brought the Legate the most ample powers, in order to accomplish the great work of the nation's reconciliation with the Catholick Church : and the incident of its arriving at that critical juncture (*being doubtless as stupendous a miracle as the wind turning at Calais*) was interpreted as a declaration of heaven in favour of a cause, which then engaged the attention of all Europe. B. ii. p. 80.

To which it might be added with as much propriety, and more probability of truth, That the Death of Queen Mary and Cardinal Pole, happening soon after, and almost in the same hour, and before this reconciliation could be thoroughly finished, might be interpreted as a declaration of Heaven in disfavour of a Cause, which Providence would bring to nought ;

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which extraordinary events, together with the succession of Elizabeth to the Crown, and the establishment of the Protestant Religion in these Kingdoms, against which the Gates of Rome have never since prevailed, did then and do to this day, engage the attention of all Christendom.

L E T T E R XXIII.

FROM this description of our Author, we are naturally led to make some remarks on his Characters of the Persons introduced into his History, which are given in so partial a manner to all who are of his Communion and so prejudiced to all who differ from it, that it is very evident a Papistical Orthodoxy is the standard which he measures them by; for the more the Romanist hath merited of his Church, the nearer he approaches to the summit of perfection, and the more the Reformer hath acted against it, the deeper he is sunk in vileness: The Lady Jane Grey is the only Protestant to be met with in his History whom he spares, and that is upon account of her youth, though he is afraid she had hurt herself by her application

application to the study of the scriptures, which though undertaken, he says, by the sex on the specious principle of seeking the truth, yet too often betrays them into errors, or confirms them in those they have already imbibed. B. ii. p. 36. Pope *Paul* IV. is almost the only Papist he censures, and the reason for it was his enmity to Pole.

We will begin with examining his Characters of the Roman Catholicks, and then proceed to those of the Reformers.

At the head of the first Class stands Cardinal Pole, whom our Historians, for his being excluded from the persecuting councils in Queen Mary's reign, have spoken of ~~him~~ much more favourably than he really deserved, and his failings would have been buried in oblivion had not Phillips officiously brought them out to publick View ; for thinking to take the advantage of this indulgence, he hath attempted to raise Pole's Character upon the ruins of the Reformation, and for his opposition to the measures for advancing it he hath produced him as the most disinterested patriot, the most illustrious hero, and the most accomplished churchman, that existed in his or any other age.

As therefore this Biographer hath made Pole his instrument for throwing a load of infamy upon the Reformation, it is become necessary in its vindication, to supply the defects of our historians, and to set Pole's character in its just and true light.

Burnet and Godwin have said but little more in the general character of him, than that he was a Prelate of a sweet and amiable temper, who would have been glad to have brought back the English Nation by fair and lawful means to their antient Belief, but approved not of the method of fire and sword: As a supplement to this partial description, it must be added, that he was a person of a weak understanding, extremely superstitious, a violent Bigot to the Supremacy and Power of the See of Rome, of an ambitious spirit, guilty of the foulest ingratitude to his Royal Benefactor, and a Rebel and Traitor to his King and Country.

All which articles will be clearly proved from a brief detail of his Life, extracted from the most authentick records, and from Phillips's and Pole's own writings.

Reginald Pole was second Cousin to Henry VIII. and lineally descended by his Mother from
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the House of York : the King took him very soon under his patronage, and made him before he was 15 years old, Prebendary of Sarum, and Dean of Winbourne-Minster in Dorsetshire and of Exeter ; in his 17th year Pole went to the University of Padua, where the King allowed him a large annual pension suitable to his rank, or 500 l. which is equal to 5000 l. at present. His mother, the Countess of Salisbury was an intimate friend and confidant of Queen Catharine, and was also entrusted with the education of her daughter the Princess Mary ; who being bred up in the same family with Reginald, became very early acquainted with him, and their acquaintance soon grew into a mutual affection, which on his side was quickened by ambition ; for the Princess was then heir apparent to the Crown, and her Mother not likely to have any more children ; it is very natural therefore to suppose that Pole flattered himself with the prospect of being one day husband to a Queen of England, and perhaps a partner with her on the Throne : His whole future conduct confirms this supposition, and without it, it is impossible to account for his behaviour to his Royal Patron.

When

When the affair of the King's Divorce from Catharine of Arragon was in Agitation, it is no wonder that Reginald in his heart was violently set against it, for it tended to bastardize her Daughter, and opened a way to a second marriage, which might produce a male heir to the Crown, who though younger would take place of a female : but the fear of incurring the King's displeasure kept Pole upon the reserve in this point, till Henry wanting him to take his part, offered him the Archbishoprick of York, which was then void by Wolsey's death, upon condition that he would publicly declare for the divorce ; Pole deferred his answer as long as he could, but being at length obliged to give it, he refused the offer on those terms, and though he did it in the most submissive manner, yet the King was highly provoked against him, and conferred the Archbishoprick upon another ; however he was soon after appeased, and continued his pension to him.

The Pope's opposition to the Divorce set the King upon claiming the Supremacy in the Church of England ; Pole not approving of Henry's design, but yet being afraid to appear openly against it, desired leave to go abroad,
which

which the King assented to ; he was now about thirty three years old when he left England, and retired to Avignon, a City of Provence, where he staid about a twelve-month, and then went to Padua ; at this place after some time he received the King's orders, by which he was commanded to send him his opinion, in writing, concerning the Supremacy. Pole had kept his sentiments upon it so close, that the King presumed upon a declaration in his favour, several of Reginald's acquaintance also had the same expectation, and indeed it appears from his own account of himself that he was for some time in suspense which side he should take ; but the executions of Fisher and Moore, his intimate friends, exasperated him against the King ; the pressing solicitations likewise of the Court of Rome, which he well knew had great influence on the principal powers of Europe, and the disaffection of the people in England, awakened his ambition, and not only turned the scale in favour of the Pope, but prevailed with him to write a treatise, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, in which he first attempts to disprove the Regal, and establish the Papal Supremacy, in the Church of England ; and then proceeds to abuse the King

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in the most scurrilous manner, upbraiding him with the murder of Fisher and Moore, and for the injuries he had done to his Queen and her Daughter ; making him worse than Nero or Domitian for his cruelties, he calls him one of the Giants that waged war against Heaven, a double-headed Cerberus, Head of the Devil's Church, and the Devil himself ; and pours forth a Torrent of such infamous abuse as was never exceeded even in Billingsgate. If Pole had delivered his opinion modestly and dispassionately, he might have pleaded Conviction and Conscience, but nothing could justify these virulent invectives ; his fastest friends condemned him for it, and it was very evident to all the world, that they were not the language of pure sincerity, but the foam of rage, malice, and disappointed ambition. The arguments likewise which convinced him of the Papal Supremacy, shew the weakness of his head, as much as these slanders do the depravity of his heart.

I was confirmed, says he, in these sentiments, not so much by the many and cogent reasons which I had gathered from the writings of others, or from what my own thoughts had suggested in the long and repeated reflections

I had

I had made on the affair, as by that single argument, with which the blood of these Champions, shed in this cause, furnished me ; that the divine veracity hath always manifested itself by such evidence, we are assured first by his death, who was truth itself, and afterwards by those legions of witnesses, who have attested the same Doctrine in all parts, and through all ages of the world ; I beheld, therefore, the hand-writing of God in these Sufferings, whose past life was a sufficient proof of the favour they had found with him, and I could not but reverence the sign and subscribe to it, B.i. p. 115.

The Suffering of Death is indeed a convincing proof of the person's belief of the Doctrines, for which he suffers, but it is no infallible proof of the truth of the Doctrines themselves ; for there is hardly any religious tenet, however absurd it be, but what may boast of its Martyrs. It was the humour of the times, which Pole gave into, to take the testimony of an opinion sealed with blood for an incontestable demonstration of its truth ; though this kind of proof had been lately refuted and exposed by a very remark-

able fact, related by the author of the life of Pope Alexander VI. where a Dominican Friar is said to have offered himself to the flames, to verify the Doctrines espoused by Savanorola, which was accordingly admitted as an undeniable argument for their truth, till another, as frantic an Enthusiast as the former, made the same offer for the establishment of the direct contrary opinions : Here then was demonstration against demonstration, the subjects in dispute were reduced to their former uncertainty, and nothing could be inferred, but the madness of these Monks, and the weakness of their proofs ; but weak as they were, they were sufficient to convince Pole of the Pope's Supremacy.

L E T T E R XXIV.

THE King was greatly surpris'd and enraged at these ungrateful returns of his Kinsman and Dependant, who had received not only no Provocation from him, but was under the highest obligations to him: Pole therefore had forfeited all title to the Royal Bounty, and the King who had been the best of friends, finding himself treated as the worst of enemies, had abundant reason to withdraw his pension, which had hitherto been constantly returned to him, and put an end to all favours: This indeed was no more than what Pole from the consciousness of his deserts expected, and had been providing against by making his addresses to the Court of Rome, where he had sent his Book, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, for the Pope and his Friends' perusal, and had received their approbation with assurances of protection and support: for Pole being nearly related to the Royal Family in England, and having great friends and interest there, he was considered as a proper person to be employed in the recovery of this fair portion, and the restoration of a revolted people

to their obedience to the See of Rome: the Pope with his College of Cardinals therefore was determined to get him over to his side, and soon after he had drawn him into this breach with the King, he commanded him to repair to Rome; Henry being informed of it, and apprehensive what use was designed to be made of him there, endeavoured to prevent his journey, by threatening messages sent by Cromwell, and also by gentle persuasions from his relations; but neither the loud menaces of the English Ministry, nor the softer entreaties of his Mother the Countess of Salisbury, and of his Brother the Lord Montague, could prevail with him to desist from taking a step so displeasing to the King, and perilous to them.

Having thus broke through all the ties of gratitude, loyalty, and affection, to his King and Country, Pole had no restraints to hinder him from running the greatest lengths in his opposition to them: he had not been long at Rome before the Pope offered him a Cardinal's Hat, this promotion not suiting with his favourite scheme, he at first declined it, but the Pope insisting upon it, he was obliged to accept it. The King about this time suppressed the lesser Monasteries in England, which causing
great

great disturbances among the Papists, there were several insurrections ; and our Author affirms that no less than 20,000 male-contents took up arms in Lincolnshire, and 40,000 in the Northern Counties, who got possession of York and Hull ; and were joined by the Archbishop of York, Dr. Lee, and Lord Darcy : the first of these formidable bodies dispersed themselves of their own accord ; the other retired to their own homes without coming to an engagement, upon the approach of the Duke of Norfolk, with a far less number. However these insurrections, which some had not lessened at Rome, seemed there to indicate a revolution in favour of the Papal Supremacy ; the Conclave therefore was resolved to support them as much as lay in their power, and embrace this seasonable opportunity of turning his own Relation against the King, and making him their tool for fomenting sedition and rebellion in England. For these purposes Pole was ordered to go into the Low Countries in the quality of a Legate, where, from the nearness of his situation, he might have early and full intelligence of the strength and progress of the Rebels, and when occasion offered might soon cross the British Channel and
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join them. And here I cannot but observe that Mr. Phillips never calls them Rebels, but distinguishes them by the milder appellation of Insurgents, because he considers them I suppose as the body of the People engaged in a just cause, and the King as an Usurper and his Party the Rebels: the Pope had no money nor men to support his cause, but he fitted out Pole with all the means he had in his power, he gave him an ample and discretionary commission to do every thing which might distress Henry, and be of emolument to the See of Rome; he armed him likewise with Credentials to the several Powers of Europe: his first letter our Author says was addressed to the English nation, and declared the satisfaction his Holiness had received from the late proof they had given, that their revolt from a faith and obedience, by which they had till then distinguished themselves, had been constrained and forced, he required them to pay due deference to the Legate, and assist him in the execution of his orders, which had been dictated by Piety, and were directed to the glory of GOD, and their welfare.

His second letter was to the King of Scotland, James V. who was exhorted and entreated
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to support the Legate by favouring the dispositions the English had shewed to return to the Faith of their ancestors, as their neighbourhood gave him a facility to assist them; and at the same time the Pope sent him a sword and a cap of maintenance, with another letter explaining the typical representation of each present.

The other Letters were to the most Christian King, and to Mary Dowager Queen of Hungary, Sister to Charles V. and Governess of the Low Countries, and were of the like import. p. 175. Besides these Credentials, it is upon good grounds supposed, that Pole had in his pocket the Pope's Excommunication and Deposition of Henry; which was drawn up about this time, and to be published upon the first fair opportunity: for these and other reasons Pole is charged, by several of our Historians, with having a design upon the Crown of England; and though his Biographer takes much pains to clear him of it, yet he seems to me, even in his laboured apology, to make such concessions, and allow such testimonies, as indisputably confirm it; and if Pole's principles may be judged of from his conduct, he must have had some such ambitious views; for he
could

could not have done more as times and circumstances then were, had he any such intentions, and he would certainly have done much less, if he had none : he appeared to offer himself for this commission when he tells the Pope, that some proper person should be appointed to keep up the resolutions of the Insurgents in England, and a sufficient fund allowed for that purpose : and his apologist acknowledges that Pole had entered into a *kind of offensive* state with his Sovereign by his journey into the Low Countries, for he went there with *an hostile intention* ; his sole business was to support the Rebels, and upon any prospect of their success, to join them : it is easy therefore to guess what would have been the consequence if the King's forces had been defeated, and it is as easy to guess what Pole imagined the consequence would be from the reasons he alledges for his motives in his letters and other works, where this part of his conduct is the subject. For he represents the original contract between the King and People as no longer subsisting, having been violated by the former in many concerns of the highest and most weighty importance, that the King had broken their Grand Charter, had
made

made the acknowledgment of the Pope's supremacy high treason; had substituted a strange Head in its room, and punished those who refused to submit to it as traitors and felons; that he had made examples of Fisher and Moore, and outlawed him, the Pope's Legate; had ejected thousands out of their possessions, and delivered them over to vagrancy and want, and that the Parliament had joined with him in these outrages, and were become the joint oppressors of the People; and lastly, the Nation had declared their sense of its wrongs, by the insurrections they had made to redress them.

Now for what other purpose doth Pole produce all these arguments, and make the voice of a licentious rabble the sense of the nation, but to vindicate his own conduct, and prove the lawfulness of his and their attempts to pull down Henry, and place him the Legate upon the throne? The English Ministry had early intelligence of Pole's commission, they were informed of his instructions, and the steps he was to take for executing them; they suspected likewise what his real intentions were, and took effectual measures to prevent them, the King of France was prevailed upon through their instigation, to signify to the Legate, upon

the day of his arrival at Paris in his way to the Netherlands, that he would not treat with him upon the business he was charged with, and ordered him to quit his dominions without delay; upon the receipt of this message Pole immediately set out for Cambray, where he sent to the Governess of the Low Countries for leave to pass through them to Liege, but Henry was there also before-hand with him, and had engaged her not to suffer Pole to prosecute his journey through her territories. The Pope hearing of these obstacles, and also of the dispersion of the Insurgents in England, sent to his Legate to return to Rome, but he not knowing the miserable situation of his affairs in England so well as the Pope, or not willing to give up the fair prospect his ambition had set before him, in so abrupt a manner, interceded to continue a little longer in the place he then was; alledging for his reasons, that the cause which he had undertaken seemed at first to promise success, from the great number of persons who had taken up arms in England, and the quality of their commanders; and though it was now beginning to grow desperate, yet in his opinion, it was not to be entirely abandoned, till it farther appeared that
nothing

nothing more could be effected, for his precipitate departure would dispirit their friends, and all would be inevitably lost ; while on the contrary, the zeal of their well-wishers would be kept alive, if they had one of their own nation in their sight, a Chief whose reputation had been unblemished, and whose example and authority might have influence on them, and who was such a one as no dangers could intimidate when the good of his country was at stake. The Pope through these suggestions permitted Pole to stay as long as he thought proper, and he continued at Liege about three months longer, when every glimmering hope vanishing, and his dangers daily increasing upon him, he was obliged to yield to the necessity of the times, and returned in the utmost despair to the place from whence he came : From hence it is very evident that Pole did not deny his opposition to the King, but laboured to justify himself in it. The tumults in England being quite suppressed, the King and Parliament proceeded against Pole, they had him attainted of High Treason, confiscated all his goods, set a reward of fifty thousand crowns on his head, and made it Treason for any Subject of Britain to hold any correspondence with

him : Mr. Phillips exclaims most vehemently against this treatment of his Hero ; presuming, I suppose, upon the standing maxim of the Romish Church, that whatever was done for the Pope and the Hierarchy was just and right, and whatever was done against them was iniquitous and wrong : but in the judgment of common sense Henry did no more than what self-defence, and the trust reposed in him by his Subjects, required him to do ; and what every Sovereign in Europe would have done had they been in his place and circumstances. Pole as a relation, a dependant, and a natural born subject of the King of England, was under the strictest obligations of affection, gratitude, and loyalty to him ; yet he undertook, by the Pope's Legation, to dissolve himself and all Henry's Subjects from their allegiance to him ; to incense his neighbouring powers against him, to blow up the flames of civil war in the bowels of his Kingdom, to assist the malecontents at the hazard of his life, and if occasion served to head them in deposing and murdering their King. Having thus proved himself a Rebel and a Traitor to his Sovereign and his Country, Henry would have been wanting to himself and his people, if he had not treated him

him

him as such. His Embassadors were ordered to insist upon the French King's seizing the Cardinal, when he entered into his dominions, and delivering him into their Master's hands : and it is amazing to see what reflections Pole and his Panegyrist make upon this demand, and with what assurance they both comment upon it, as if no kind of provocation had ever been given to the King of England, and as if Pole was perfectly innocent, and engaged in such a righteous cause, that the King of France was in honour and conscience bound to protect and support him in it, and that neither Henry, nor any of his Subjects, ought to be offended at it, or stir in their own defence against him : but no reader of common sense can be imposed upon by such manifestly absurd suppositions. And if there was any offensive or defensive league subsisting at that time between the two Kings, it is self evident, that the strongest law of nature, that is, the law of self preservation, authorized Henry to make this demand upon his ally, and that the law of justice and friendship obliged Francis to deliver up Pole, as a person who had entered into, and was going to execute, a most desperate conspiracy against his King and Country, and had made his safety

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and welfare incompatible with the safety and welfare of the King of England. But to conclude this letter, though Pole could not attain to the heights he aspired after, yet as his will was not wanting, and he had said in his heart, *I will exalt myself above the King, I will mount his Throne*, he was therefore justly entitled to Ambition's motto, *Ascendam*. Isaiah, xiv. 13.

L E T T E R XXV.

IN the beginning of the year 1539, the greater Monasteries were suppressed, which was between two and three years after the dissolution of the lesser monasteries; about this time the Pope had an interview with the Emperor, and the King of France, at Nice, where he endeavoured as a mediator to reconcile them to one another: And though he could not bring them to an absolute peace, yet he prevailed with them to enter into a truce for ten years; at this time it is said they both promised the Pope to break off all communication with Henry, and join their forces in restoring the Papal Supremacy in England, and assist a once flourishing kingdom, which had now no resource but from the good offices of her allies.

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The Pope had long since despaired of recovering, by gentle means or menaces, so fair a portion to his Church (or in a homelier but truer phrase, of filling his coffers with immense sums of money, as his predecessors had done, by their exactions and plunder of so rich a kingdom) and was determined to proceed to extremities ; his excommunication and deposition of Henry had been drawn up near three years ago, and only waited a favourable conjuncture for their publication, which now seemed to offer itself, from the union and promises of these two Potentates. They were therefore now openly declared, and, as Mr. Phillips says, with the formalities, and in the stile usual upon such occasions ; that is, the excommunicated person is cut off from the communion of the Faithful, deprived of the participation of the Sacraments, forbid to enter the Church and join in the exercise of any act of religious worship : and all Christians are likewise prohibited all commerce and communion with him, *in any of these Articles*. Which last words are an addition of Mr. Phillips, in order to soften the sentence : for the Pope's excommunication was always absolute and unconditional, and forbid all communion or commerce

with

with the excommunicated person : so that an absolution of the Subjects from their allegiance, and consequently a deposition of their Sovereign, was virtually implied in it ; for if christians were cut off from all communion or intercourse with their King, all connections between them must be entirely broke ; and in such cases, it is very plain there could be no practical medium between not being with him, and being against him ; had the sentence therefore went no farther, it could not be justified. Mr. Phillips's additional clause likewise was highly equivocal and unnecessary ; for this, and indeed all other excommunications from his own account, where Princes were the persons excommunicated, had for above five hundred years before proceeded to deprive them of their Kingdoms, and absolve all their Subjects from their duty to them, and require them to take up arms against and destroy them as the detested enemies of GOD and Man. This Biographer, indeed, doth not pretend to vindicate this part of the sentence, but condemns it as an usurpation of the Pope's ; and I hope he speaks his real sentiments, but evasions, dissimulations, and reservations, have been so much in vogue among the Romish Clergy, that

that I am sorry to say, they have almost lost all credit with Protestants, and given them just grounds to question their sincerity even in an open disavowal of the Papal Power to depose Kings; but if our Author doth not dissemble his own, he certainly doth his Hero's principles, and even against such strong presumptions that it is not in the power of sophistry to palliate or excuse them.

The Pope having now the promises of the Emperor and the King of France for acting against Henry, thought no time was to be lost, and immediately commissioned Pole to go to them with this Excommunication and Deposition; and excite them to turn their arms against the King of England. The Cardinal gladly accepted of this office, as it raised in him fresh hopes, and soothed his ambition: Mr. Phillips asserts that he made no use of the deposing part; it cannot, says he, be objected against him that the negotiation was in some part founded on the supposition that Henry, in virtue of the Papal sentence, had forfeited his right to the Kingdom, since whatever the Legate's private opinion might have been of the Pope's deposing power in general; certain it is

that he never instigated the Courts, to which he was sent to act in consequence of it: for the proof of which certainty he appeals to a solemn declaration of Pole to Edward the sixth, which he says is a voucher above exception. Here this Author takes it for granted that whatever Pole saith must be true, and should be admitted by all the world as such, though his whole conduct in this affair directly contradicts it; but should Pole's veracity be ever so unexceptionable, yet it seems he only speaks in this declaration to Edward the Sixth of his first embassy to the Low Countries, and not of this last; so that this Biographer's certainty hath no voucher at all to support it, and he might have asserted with as much confidence that Pole omitted any other part or the whole of his instructions. There can be likewise no doubt what the Cardinal's private opinion was concerning the Papal Power; for his Holiness would never have made choice of him for his Legate, had he not been very well assured of his real sentiments upon it; neither can it admit of the least dispute whether Pole acted agreeable to these sentiments, if it be considered what he had in charge from the Pope. His instructions,

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it seems, were to lay before his Imperial Majesty the whole conduct of the King of England, in order to prevail on him to use his best endeavours for bringing back his Kingdom to a worship it had been constrained to forsake, and putting an end to enormities not less destructive of mankind than hateful to GOD; that the Emperor would find a conformity of sentiments in the King of Scotland, and the new Cardinal Beaton, on whose ability and credit great stress might be laid; and in conclusion, that all farther communication with Henry should be broke off; and that the leagues against the Turk, and all other business should be entirely laid aside for the present, that they might have nothing to divert them from exerting their confederate Powers against the King of England.

These instructions, Mr. Phillips acknowledges were penned in a very loose stile, for which the importance of the matter considered it may be hard to account: and if it be added, that this Excommunication had been drawn up, revised, and corrected, for several years before, it would be still harder to account for the particular instructions upon them, if they had not been perfectly conformable to the principles and

practices of all who were concerned in them : they have likewise, continues our Author, an hostile air with respect to Henry, so that it may seem extraordinary, the Legate should take upon him such a commission. They had indeed an extreme hostile air when they absolved all Henry's Subjects from their allegiance to him, and commanded every power in Europe to aid and assist them in deposing and murdering him by whatever means it could be done. But to whom could this undertaking of the Legate seem extraordinary, when all the world knew how agreeable it was to his aspiring temper, and that it set before him so flattering a prospect of ascending the English Throne ?

Though Phillips had but a few pages before dogmatically asserted, that Pole never instigated the Emperor to act according to that part of his instructions which related to Henry's deposition, yet he now seems to question his own authority, or at least the credit of others upon it, and seeing facts so very strong against him, he proceeds to clear up the difficulty of the Cardinal's engaging in measures to dethrone his Sovereign, by attempting to justify him in it : For he says that Pole had the precedent
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of the Barons, who called over the Dauphin of France to free them from the frantic tyranny of King John, and that which happened in his own times of Henry VII. who though an alien to the crown, was chose by the unanimous consent of the nation to rescue them from the oppression of Richard III. The evils which oppressed his country with respect to property, conscience, and life itself, persuaded Pole of the lawfulness of having recourse to similar means, in order to redress wrongs which had no other prospect of remedy ; the near alliance he had to the Crown, and the obligations which this laid him under of being particularly vigilant for the welfare of his Country, seem to have left him more at large as to the expedients which were to rescue it from such oppressions. B. i. p. 242, 243.

The far greater part of the Lords and Commons, and more than one half of the Gentry and Commonalty of the Kingdom were Protestants, and many of the Roman Catholicks approved of the alterations which had been made in Religion ; even Tunstall and Gardiner, with several other Romish Bishops, wrote in defence of the Regal Supremacy ; and the Duke of Norfolk commanded the King's army
against

against the Rebels, who had taken up arms upon the suppression of the lesser Monasteries. Yet all these were as nothing in the estimation of Pole or Phillips; the Protestants were dead as to spirituals, and therefore were to be looked upon as cyphers in temporals, and to be exterminated as soon as possible; the other were strays, and wanted their chief shepherd to recall them to their fold; thus the whole nation was unanimous for deposing Henry, and joined in one voice to call over Pole to supplant and succeed him, in the same manner as it was for calling over the Dauphin of France, and the Earl of Richmond: And this indisputable unanimity had convinced Pole of the lawfulness of having recourse to similar means, that is, to plunge the nation into a civil war, and to cut off all its dead and rotten members.

The near alliance Pole had to the Crown is a very equivocal expression; if Mr. Phillips means by it his affinity to the crowned Head and his Family, then his near relation to him, and the many signal favours he had received from him, obliged him (Pole) in a most particular manner to protect and defend him from all Rebels, Traitors, and Deposers, and not to be the Rebel, Traitor, and Deposer himself.

But

But if this Author means by Pole's alliance, his right to the Crown, then the obligation which this right laid him under, left him it seems at large to use any violent expedients, not only for extirpating and murdering Henry, but his Son Edward, and his Daughter Elizabeth, with all the Heirs that stood before him to the Crown; that after the example of his great uncle Richard III. he might clear the way, and wade through seas of blood to the pinnacle of his ambition.

Pole went with his instrument of Excommunication and Deposition to Spain, in order to excite the Emperor to a declaration of war against England, in conjunction with France, for the dethroning of Henry: But though there had been a truce concluded between these two Potentates, yet they were jealous and afraid of each other, and both resolved within themselves not to break with Henry. The Emperor therefore received the Legate very coldly, and signified to him that the present juncture was unseasonable for the execution of what the Pope required; and to get rid of his solicitations, he advised Pole to go to the French Court and sound their dispositions; for
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by them he should regulate his own. Pole was thoroughly mortified at this disappointment, all his hopes were again blasted in the bud, and he could not help representing to the Emperor, that as he was the Prince particularly marked out by Heaven to assist England in her day of distress, and had refused to give her any succour, he must expect the divine vengeance to fall upon his head. And some time after in a letter to his friend Contareni, he attributed the Emperor's defeat by the Turk to a judgment of the Almighty, for not falling upon Henry, and slighting the Pope's Excommunication and Deposition of him.

L E T T E R XXVI.

LORD Herbert affirms in his History, that Cardinal Pole laboured with all his power, by means of his correspondents in England, to alienate the hearts of the Subjects from the King, and to foment a civil war in the Nation, by publishing every where that Henry had subverted all Religion to set up his own fictions. And Burnet in particular asserts, that several have thought the Cardinal had some private views, which concerned not Religion; he was of the House of York by his Mother, and is said also to have had an inclination for the Princess Mary, and to bestir himself thus in order to marry and set her on the Throne in the room of her Father; at least there is reason to suspect his extraordinary zeal was fortified by some hidden views, and that in acting for the Pope he was labouring his own advancement. B. i. p. 221.

Sir Jeffrey Pole, the Cardinal's own Brother, privately informed the King that he held a correspondence with Henry Courtney, Marquis of Exeter, Grandson of Edward the Fourth; Lord Montague; Sir Edward Nevil; and Sir

Nicholas Carew, Master of the Horse: and that Pole's agents were a Priest and a Mariner. All these were upon this information apprehended, condemned, and executed: but the informer was pardoned, as a reward for his intelligence: soon after the Cardinal's Mother, the Countess of Salisbury, was apprehended, and after two years imprisonment, executed for the same offence. But notwithstanding the hostile measures, which Pole had entered into, and the expedients which he thought himself at large to make use of for deposing his Royal Patron, as have been above related, yet his Biographer roundly asserts that gratitude was a cardinal virtue in this illustrious person; that he had been declared a Traitor, for causes which in their own nature did not seem to come up to the article of Treason; and that the only crime of the afore-mentioned persons was (not their correspondence with, but) their affinity to him. Pole likewise always presumes upon his own and their innocence; he asserts, that no one ever questioned the duty and allegiance of these accomplices (though his own brother had informed against them for their treasonable correspondence with him); that their whole conduct was faultless, unless in too great obsequiousness

ousness to Henry's councils ; that a resolution to deliver their Country from evils was salutary, and would have justified such an enterprize ; but even this charge which was brought against them was not made out, for if it had, it would have been published in vindication of the murder of some of the noblest and best men of the Realm ; but as he (Pole) could find nothing of that Kind, he could only discover, what he had long suspected, the Tyrant's hatred to virtue and the nobility.

Now from a review of the whole of Pole's conduct, with respect to his King and Country, as set forth by himself and his Biographer, nothing can be more evident than that both their vindications of it necessarily suppose and are founded upon such like principles as these, viz. that

Whoever acts for the good of the Church, or the advancement of the Papal and Hierarchical Power, is discharged from the obligations of honesty, honour, conscience, and allegiance to Hereticks and Schismatics ; that all such pious intentions will give a sanction to ingratitude, hypocrisy, treason, rebellion, conspiracies, and assassinations of every kind : and that whoever acts in opposition to the Pope and the

Hierarchy, hath forfeited all his right of self defence, is a Devil incarnate, an outcast of Heaven, and by any means to be extirpated from the earth.

It is amazing to see the heights which the bigots of the Romish Church have carried the authority of their Pontiff and Clergy : They oppose and exalt them above all that is called G O D, or that is worshipped ; attributing Powers to them which even Omnipotence itself disclaimeth ; supposing them capable of performing impossibilities, reconciling contradictions, dissolving all moral duties, converting good into evil and evil into good ; sanctifying falshood and fraud, and cancelling the laws of natural and revealed Religion : Bishop White asserts, that when men depart from the Church, they lose all criterion of truth and falshood in matters of Religion, and must necessarily be carried about with every wind of Doctrine. Cardinal Cusanus in his epistle to the Bohemians says, that the word of G O D is most worthy when it is farthest removed from all Scripture, that the Scriptures must be explained by the prevailing rites of the Church, and that when the Church changes her decrees the will of G O D is changed with them. And

Bellarmine,

Bellarmino, that renowned champion of the Church of Rome, Cardinal and Archbishop, affirms, that should the Pope declare virtues to be vices, and vices virtues, good Christians are in conscience bound to believe him. And these are the Doctrines, not of a few individuals, but of the whole Romish Church, maintained by Popes, and confirmed by General Councils: And in particular the Emperor Sigismund gave a safe conduct to John Huss for passing through his dominions; and the Council at Constance solemnly and publicly promised Jerome of Prague safety and protection, if he would come to Constance; in their engagement indeed they had inserted this condition, without prejudice to justice, and as far as the Catholick Faith required it. But when they had got these two persons into their power, the Fathers of the Council unanimously decreed, that they were seditious, obstinate, incorrigible followers and defenders of Wickliff; hardened, crafty, malicious, and convicted Hereticks; that they could not protect them without violating justice; and the Catholick Faith required that they should be cut off as corrupt members of the Church, holding impious, horrible, and damnable Tenets; and therefore

therefore the Council condemned them to be burnt alive, and had them executed accordingly. From whence it is evident that this was an ensnaring condition, added with a premeditated design to betray the confidence that should be placed upon it ; and that the Romish Church requires its members to practice hypocrisy, to keep no faith with Protestants, and to grant every appearance, but not the least substance of a protection.

As these principles are inconsistent with the fundamental maxims of government, and subversive of the very nature of society, the persons who espouse them, have no title to be tolerated in it. And that Community which is so indulgent as to take such Rattle-snakes into its bosom, must suppose that they from the badness of their constitution, will never gather strength sufficient to give a mortal bite ; or if they should, it will be by such a gradual increase, that timely notice will be given for shaking them off : but where errors are of such fatal consequence, and knowledge and circumspection are the only security, the duties which self-preservation lays upon society, call loudly upon every member of it, to have an extreme watchful

watchful and jealous eye over such a dangerous and desperate Generation of Vipers.

But to return to Pole's Character. The bigotry which had rivetted him to the See of Rome, rendered him excessively credulous and superstitious, and he was addicted no less than his Biographer, to engross Providence to himself, and interpret natural occurrences into divine judgments upon his adversaries, which are presumptions peculiar to Miracle-mongers and Religionists; the defeat of the Emperor by the Turk, just now mentioned, is a remarkable instance of this kind; and the Cardinal's own narration of what occurred to him in his visit to the Cavern near the great Road between Aix and Marseilles, called Sainte Beaume, is so full a proof of his weakness, credulity, and superstition, that no other confirmation will be wanted on this head.

An ancient tradition, he says, had supposed that Mary Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus, were in hatred to our Lord, shipped off in a tattered vessel, after his ascension, and conducted by providence to the Coast of Provence, where the Women are said to pass the remainder of their days: This story is so romantick, that it even exceeds Phillips's faith, for he thinks
that

that the fitness of the place for penitential exercises, gave birth to this opinion : But the Cardinal's credulity was capacious enough to contain it, for he went out of his way on purpose to visit this Sanctuary, in which he expressly asserts that the remains of the holy Penitent were deposited ; here he sent up an earnest supplication for the King, and fell into a long fit of weeping, but he felt not the inward comfort he desired, as a pledge of his request being granted, but rather seemed to hear a voice which increased his affliction, and was the same which said to the Prophet, who was likewise supplicating for his Sovereign, why dost thou lament a Person whom I have cast off? B. 1. P. 272, 273.

The Cardinal's zeal for the Pope had frequently suppressed his remorse of conscience for his ingratitude to the King ; and here the place and circumstances prompting him to indulge his superstition, it was no wonder that it triumphed over his allegiance to his Sovereign, and vented itself in that suberb style, Why dost thou lament one whom I have cast off? Such is the nature of Enthusiasm, that when it has once got compleat possession of the mind, it presumptuously personates the supreme Being,
and

and delivers itself as His Oracle, whilst the Enthusiast himself is verily persuaded, that its blasphemous dictates proceed from the Holy Spirit of God : As Pole through its influences gave credit to the wild tradition concerning this Cavern, so he mistook the transports of his over-heated imagination, for divine energies, and believed the persons whom his frantic zeal had ejected from his own favour were the real outcasts of Heaven.

The last thing proposed to be considered in Pole's character, was his temper in respect to the Protestants : and here it is to be observed that the commendations which most of our Historians have bestowed upon him for his moderation, are to be understood only in a relative sense, or in comparison with the fury of the flaming Bigots of those times, who are said to have excluded him from their Councils for Persecutions ; for the same may be applied to him as was to his friend Sadolet, that he was moderate for a Papist, but uncharitable as a Christian ; and for the proof of it I appeal to his own declaration and behaviour : For in his letter to the Bishop of Ausbourg he acknowledges, that the case supposed of any one's opinion being extremely pernicious, and

he no less industrious to corrupt others than depraved himself, I might say such a one might be capitally punished, and as a rotten member cut off from the body. B. ii. p. 164.

Mr. Phillips, as a proof of the Cardinal's lenity, says, that only two persons were put to Death for their Religion when he was Governour of Viterbo, a principal city in the Pope's patrimony. These executions, supposing them to be as related, were probably very few in comparison to what were at that time in other parts of the Pope's dominions ; yet it is with religious lenity as with justice, for as two or three iniquitous acts are sufficient to denominate a man unjust, so as few executions at the stake will constitute the Character of an intolerant persecuting temper.

This Author likewise acknowledges, that a commission was issued out from the Cardinal, on occasion of several pernicious Doctrines taught and propagated in the Diocese of Canterbury, to apprehend the persons accused of them, to excommunicate, and if the atrociousness of the Crime required it, to deliver them over to the Civil Magistrate ; in consequence of which commission he informs their Majesties
of

of some who had been convicted, and leaves them to be punished as they deserved. b.ii. p.165.

But all commissions for persecuting Hereticks in this Kingdom, at that time, came from him as the Pope's Legate ; and it is said that in order to purge away the suspicion of Heterodoxy, and the scandalous charge of favouring Lutherans, which Pope Paul IV. had laid to him, he was more than ordinarily zealous for extirpating the Protestants.

Some of our Historians affirm, that the persecution in Mary's reign raged chiefly in the Diocese of London and in Kent ; and Fox in particular asserts, that five persons were burnt for heresy at Canterbury not many days before the Cardinal's death.

Mr. Phillips mentions Cardinal Pole's being chosen Chancellor of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge ; and he farther adds, concerning the former, that he revised and corrected their statutes, B. ii. p. 172. But he passes over in silence his visitation of both these places. What his reasons were for suppressing these remarkable occurrences of his life, when he was so very minute in every other particular, are best known to himself ; but he gives room for suspecting that these visitations reflected no

great honour on his Hero, and that some of his transactions there, if set in their true light, might cast a shade upon the other parts of his character ; for whilst he, or his Deputy, was at Cambridge, Historians inform us, that Bucer and Fagius, two German Divines, dead some years before, were ridiculously cited before the Commissioners, to give an account of their Faith : and upon their non-appearance, were ordered to be burnt. This Sentence was followed by a warrant from the Court to execute it, and the two bodies in their coffins were tied to stakes and consumed to ashes.

At Oxford, the wife of Peter Martyr was dug out of her grave, by order of the Cardinal, and buried in a dunghill, because, having been a Nun, she had broke her vow ; and in all appearance, the permitting Peter Martyr to go out of the Kingdom was heartily repented of, for if the body of his wife was thus treated, what might have been expected, had he been in the hands of his persecutors ?

Though the Protestants did not venerate the remains of these persons, yet most of them thought the persons themselves as good Saints as the Papists did Thomas Becket, and might, in the same words, apply the like contrast
between

between the behaviour of the Turks in the Island of Rhodes and the Cardinal's violations of these honourable reliques, as he had made between the same Turks and Henry's impiety. These conquerors, says he, though under all the prejudices of Mahometan superstition, had not removed any of the monuments of the Saints, which they found in the island, nor offered the least insult to them ; they had even allowed the Christians to take away several of these venerable remains, and had behaved throughout the whole affair, with the greatest decency and humanity. B. i. p. 227.

As these Mahometans had almost as contemptible a notion of those Saints, as the Cardinal had of these Lutherans, Bucer, Fagius, and Peter Martyr, it follows from his own reasoning, that he had less humanity than they : besides, what the Protestants did to Thomas Becket's tomb, was from a principle of removing the object of idolatrous worship, and convincing the people of their idle credulity ; but what he and the Papists did to the bodies of these Protestants, was from the spirit of revenge and persecution.

L E T T E R XXVII.

CARDINAL Bembo is introduced into this History, and eminently distinguished in his character, for being an acquaintance of Pole ; though in his youthful days, according to Mr. Phillips's own account of him, he had wrote very licentious verses, had also debauched a young Lady of Venice, and had three natural children by her : This love intrigue caused him to reject the solicitations by which his family pressed him to marry ; and this aversion likewise to matrimony might probably be a recommendation to Pope Leo X. for making him his Secretary of State, and to his Successor Paul III. for advancing him to the Purple : The surprize of this last unexpected promotion had put him, it is said, on the point of refusing it ; but a circumstance intervened, which discovered his real inclination for accepting it ; a circumstance which confirms the general charge of Superstition upon the Romanists, and also of the influence of that Superstition through which they are wonderfully prone, instead of submitting their will to the will of God, to bring his will to theirs. Bembo,

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in the words of our Author, going to church, the morning after he received the news, in order to ask a superior direction in the step he was to take ; as he approached the Altar, the Priest being come to those words of Jesus Christ to St. Peter, whose name Bembo bore, Peter follow me, he took them as addressed to himself, and no longer opposed a dignity which he had not sought, and now interpreted it was the will of Heaven he should accept. B. i. p. 279.

After this, he was honoured by persons of the highest distinction, and particularly by Reginald Pole, who lived with him in the greatest intimacy, and had the highest value for his many and excellent qualities. P. 279. Upon which character I shall only make this Remark, that Orthodoxy in the Papist, like Charity in the Christian, will cover a multitude of sins, and that high promotions in the Church, and a firm attachment to the Whore of Babylon, will sufficiently atone for an attachment to a Venetian Courtezan.

Where there is little or no regard to truth, there ought to be a very strong memory, for the prevention of inconsistencies and contradictions. Our Author, in one part of his
Book,

Book, says, that the Author of our Holy Religion left the government of human affairs to human institutions ; when on earth he refused to interfere with the settling a private inheritance, though at the request of one of the parties, and left it to the legal proceedings in such cases ; that he even rejected the proposal with a kind of indignation, as foreign to the purpose he came on : nor do we any where find that dominion was founded on Grace. But Pope Gregory VII. confounded spiritual jurisdiction with temporal, and attempted on the rights of the latter, which are derived from human institutions, and depend on the laws and constitutions of the respective States in which they have force. B. i. p. 238, 240.

And again, the punishments of the Catholic Church extend no farther than the spiritual state of the offender ; that the secular judge every where proceeds on this supposition, and the Church neither had nor ought to proceed any farther. B. ii. p. 167.

But Thomas Becket is celebrated by our Author for a Hero, a Patriot, a Guardian of the liberties of his country, a Saint, and a Martyr, for an unwarrantable disobedience to his Sovereign, and an obstinate contention for the immunities

immunities of the Clergy, from the laws of the land, and their exemption from the power of the Civil Magistrate, and the jurisdiction of the common Courts of Justice. Thomas Becket was the son of a Citizen of London, and bred to the Law ; he was made Archdeacon of Canterbury, and afterwards, by Henry II. High Chancellor ; in which office it is said he behaved with intolerable pride and insolence to all but the King, whom he served with the most abject submission, till he was preferred to the Arch-bishoprick of Canterbury ; and then he ever after treated him as his inferior. The Hierarchy in those days claimed an absolute power over their own body, and maintained, that they were subject to no other but Ecclesiastical Courts, where their offences of every kind were to be tried, and from whence there was no appeal. And these trials were carried on with such lenity, that the most heinous crimes were generally punished only with degradation ; and others with a short suspension, or confinement. It was proved before the King, that more than an hundred murders had been committed by Ecclesiasticks since his accession to the Throne, and not one of them punished even with degradation ; and the Bishops gloried

in this indulgence, whilst the Laity suffered the rigour of the Common Law. About this time Philip de Broc, a Clergyman in the Diocese of Sarum, committed a murder, for which he was tried in the Arch-bishop's Court, and was deprived of his Benefice, and confined to a Monastery, or banished. The King thought this punishment inadequate to his crime, which was capital by the law of the land, and remonstrated with Becket against it, declaring at the same time his intention of having all such crimes as Murder and Robbery, tried in the temporal Courts. To which Becket replied, that he would never suffer it: This was the occasion and principal cause of all his violent opposition to the King, during the remainder of his life. He collated one Lawrence, a Priest, to the Rectory of Aineford, without regarding the Patron's right of presentation; but the Patron, who was a Baron of the Realm, not willing to lose his right, hindered Lawrence from taking possession of the Benefice; for which offence Becket excommunicated him; who immediately applied to the King, and the King was extremely provoked at this daring insolence of the Archbishop, for from William the Conqueror's time,

it had been the Royal Prerogative that no Tenant in Capite should be excommunicated without the King's knowledge ; but Becket would pay no regard to it : And from that time, he proceeded to excommunicate persons without the King's privity or consent, and disputed other Prerogatives of the Crown. Neither smooth nor rough measures could check the arrogance of this haughty Prelate.

Henry got the sixteen articles of the Clarendon constitutions, containing the chief prerogatives and privileges of the King and Clergy, to be ratified by Parliament ; which Becket with the Bishops, though with great reluctance subscribed to : The second article of these constitutions was, that no Tenant in Chiefe, or any other of the King's officers, should be excommunicated, or his Lands put under an interdict, without the King's consent. The Pope refused to confirm them ; upon which Becket repented of his signing them, and suspended himself for a time from his Archiepiscopal function, for being guilty of so atrocious a crime ; but the Pope soon absolved him, and assured him of his support in his contention with the King.

Soon after this, he was accused of some abuses of his trust during his Chancellorship : to which he answered, that he was not bound to plead before Laymen, having the first Ecclesiastical dignity in the Kingdom ; being therefore above all law, he refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Court, and was thereupon judged contumacious, and a rebel to the authority of the Laws ; for which contumacy his goods were confiscated, and his accusation farther aggravated with the Charge of Perjury and Treason.

But all this could not humble his proud spirit ; for the Peers being assembled to give sentence on his Treason, he came into the presence of the King, with the most unparalleled audaciousness, and insulted him with a menace of excommunication : and when he was ordered to stay to hear his Sentence, he still protested against their Authority, and seemed to challenge his accusers to a single combat. He left them in an abrupt manner, and went that night in disguise to Flanders, and continued in exile for the space of six years ; when, by the mediation of the King of France, and the Pope, and most especially by the influence of the Clergy

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at home, the King thought fit to pardon him, and restore him to his former dignities and powers, supposing that he would for the future behave in a more submissive manner. But nothing could tame his revengeful temper; for he was no sooner landed in England than he suspended the Archbishop of York, and excommunicated the Bishops of London, Durham, and Exeter, because they had taken the King's part against him. These Prelates complained of this treatment to the King, who was then in Normandy, and threw themselves at his feet; upon which the King, being highly exasperated at the insolence of a Subject whom he had raised from the dust, dropt that expression which some of his domesticks made an handle of for entering into a conspiracy to destroy the Arch-bishop, and which they soon after effected. Thus Becket fell a Martyr to his own haughtiness and obstinacy, and to the independency of the Clergy upon the civil Courts of Justice, and the laws of the Land. He did not suffer for any article of the Christian Faith, or doctrine of the Christian Church; he was only a pertinacious vindicator of those pretended immunities and privileges which were inconsistent with the peace of the community, and

subversive

subversive of the very principles of government : and though this Biographer here calls them legal claims, and dogmatically asserts, that they bore no less a part of the constitution than any other immunities in the great charter ; yet in other places of his book already cited, he acknowledges, that the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts reached only to spiritual things ; that all temporal causes belonged to the temporal Courts, were to be tried by the civil Magistrate, and were cognizable only by him. The whole merit therefore of Becket's heroism and patriotism consisted in a malignant and turbulent temper, which shewed itself in an invincible resolution of maintaining an exemption of some members of the society from the supreme powers of that society, and an extension of the Ecclesiastical jurisdiction to every cause wherein the Clergy were concerned ; for this, and this only, he was canonized by the Pope and the Hierarchy, and was celebrated by our Author, as one of the most venerable Martyrs upon earth, and the highest Saints in heaven.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

GARDINER, Bishop of Winchester, and Chancellor, was one of the principal persons in carrying on the Divorce of Henry from Catharine of Arragon; he had been also a strenuous assertor of the King's Supremacy, he wrote a book in vindication of it, in answer to Pole's Treatise, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, and had run into all the measures of the Court, to ingratiate himself with King Henry. These things were great provocations to the Pope and the Church of Rome, and would have set him on a level with Cromwell, Cranmer, Ridley, and other Heresiarchs, of those times, had he not made ample amends for them by his violent proceedings against the Reformed, as well in this as in the succeeding reigns.

Hence Cardinal Pole says of him, in his Letter to the University of Oxford, that he, having been a part of the common fall, was permitted to live; and when the time of raising the ruins was come, had more than any one else contributed to so laudable an undertaking.

B. ii. p. 171.

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For the same reason he is characterized by Mr. Phillips, as a person of great eloquence and universal knowledge, with abilities equal to each station to which he gradually rose, and always filled so as to attract the publick observation ; that he was clear in a great measure of the imputation of cruelty on account of Religion ; that he advised the Queen to acts of lenity ; his attention also to the spirit of the constitution, and his care to exclude foreign influence from British Councils, except in the instance of the Queen's Marriage with the Prince of Spain, can never be too much commended : to the abundant proofs of his being an able Magistrate and Statesman, we are, says he, to add those of the Scholar and the Writer, which, though neither many nor voluminous, sufficiently shew the Author's abilities. B. ii, p, 120, 121.

Though Gardiner had gone these lengths to preserve his interest with the King, yet he was still a Romanist in his heart, and was the head of that Party, with the Duke of Norfolk, and others. He was almost the only person who framed and advised the famous six Articles, as tests of the Romish Religion, or what was called

called the Bloody Statute ; and well it deserves that title, for it was more severe than the Statute *De Heretico comburendo*, and many Protestants, even in that reign, were burnt for their non-compliance with it : Gardiner likewise vigorously opposed the Reformation in Edward's minority, and was imprisoned the most part of that reign. But when Mary ascended the Throne, he was restored to his Bishoprick, and made Chancellor. In his Speech to the Parliament, which met in order to make due submission to the Pope before his Legate, for their revolt, and to receive Absolution from him, he acknowledged himself to have been of the number of the delinquents, exhorted them to rise from their fallen state, and dispose themselves to a reconciliation with the common parent of all, who are entitled to the promises of the Gospel. B. ii. p. 82.

He affected an excessive zeal for the Romish Religion, and perhaps greater than he really had, to compensate for his former defects, and to recommend himself to a bigoted Queen ; by which means he became her Favourite and first Minister ; and when his power was fully established, he then took his revenge upon his enemies, who had proceeded no farther against

him than confining and detaining him in prison ; but he could not be satisfied without burning them alive. The Bishops, Ridley, and Latimer, with many others, felt the terrible effects of his vengeance ; whose execution he impatiently waited for, and deferred going to dinner on that day, till the news of it was brought him by a special messenger : And here, if I was as presumptuous as Mr. Phillips, or dared to make as free with the Divine Judgments, I might with as much reason apply them to Gardiner upon this occasion, as he hath upon any other ; for the Bishop had hardly dined, when he was seized with a suppression of urine, which in a few days put an end to a life of ambition, craft, and persecution.

The character which Historians give of Henry VIII. is almost as bad as what Mr. Phillips hath drawn for him, though not altogether for the same reasons. For, though he had been the principal person in the suppression of the Religious Houses, and had assumed the Supremacy of the Church in these Kingdoms, by which means, as our author observes, he, like an unskilful pilot, had run the vessel on those rocks, which tore away the rudder,

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and disjointed the whole frame, p. 436. yet still he continued of that ship's crew, he was always a Roman Catholic, and died a Member of that communion: and the six articles, which contain the fundamental doctrines of that Church, and were enforced by him under the severest penalties, are incontestable proofs of his being no Protestant. I shall therefore make only one observation upon what our Biographer hath been pleased to say of him. "No single instance, says he, can be produced where the Supreme Being, when he was about to reveal to men any important truth which had been unknown in all past ages, or to reclaim them from an exemplary degeneracy, had ever chosen so scandalous a King as Henry VIII. or such servile and corrupt Ministers, both in Church and State, as that Prince made use of." B. i. p. 432.

By this he would insinuate, that there was no exemplary degeneracy in the Church of Rome, and seems to apply the wickedness of the King and his Ministers as an argument against the Reformation. In like manner he thinks to calumniate, and even refute the Protestant cause, by giving credit to that idle story of Luther's familiarity with the Devil, and

producing his own confession of his conference with, and conversion to Protestantism by, the spirit of destruction. The story is so ridiculous in itself, that our Author exposes his own weakness and prejudice, by giving it a place in his books, and any attempts to disprove it would render it less trifling than it really is; and if it was true, it would prove nothing against the Reformation. It is a very fallacious way of disproving any religious tenets, by the morals of those persons who have espoused them; because there are good and bad professors of all religions: and Mr. Phillips might with more reason argue against the Christian Religion in general, because the traitor Judas was made an instrument for the bringing about the redemption of mankind, than he doth against the Reformation, from the characters of Henry VIII. and his Ministers. It is presumption to determine the methods of God's providence, or to assert what he cannot do, or never did, unless it be manifestly absurd in itself, or derogatory of his divine perfections: and if I may be allowed to use *argumentum ad hominem*, it is easy to refute our Author in his own way, or to turn his own reasoning against himself. For the defection of the

Protestants

Protestants was in his estimation an exemplary degeneracy from the Catholic Church : he will also very readily grant, that Queen Mary and her Ministers, Gardiner and Bonner, were chosen by the Supreme Being for reclaiming her Subjects from this degeneracy ; but I appeal to the records of both reigns, and to the facts which all Historians agree in, whether there were not many more acts of barbarity and bloodshed committed by this Queen and these Bishops, than there were by her Father and his Ministers ? and whether the general characters of the former are not more scandalous, more abominable, and more corrupt than the latter ?

The same kind of argument might be urged from the example of the Emperor Charles V. who about these times destroyed multitudes of Lutherans in Germany ; and also from that of his Son Philip, King of Spain, and his General and Plenipotentiary, the Duke of Alva, who, by our Author's own account, put incredible numbers of Protestants to death, in the Low Countries.

But to conclude this head, Mr. Phillips would not scruple to acknowledge Fernando Cortes,

Cortes, with the Missionaries that accompanied him, to be instruments in the hands of Providence for revealing the important truths of Christianity to the natives of South America, where by killing some hundred thousands of these defenceless Indians with his fire-arms, he conquered Mexico, convinced the residue of the people of their Idolatries, and converted them to the Christian Religion.

All these were persons who lived near the times of the Reformation, and whose characters were more vile than that of Henry VIII. or any of his Ministers.

LETTER XXIX.

CROMWELL and Cranmer were the two principal Ministers of State to Henry VIII. who advised and conducted the Reformation, and consequently they were most obnoxious to the Papists; who charged them with all the crimes that incensed malice could invent, or the mouth of scandal could bellow forth against them. I will begin with some strictures on the character which is drawn for Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex; “who our Author says, instructed Henry in the arbitrary extent of Prerogative, and became the instrument by which he exerted it.” B. i. p. 42.

“Henry had no sooner assumed the Supremacy of the Church, but he thought of making it as lucrative as possible, and appointed a Vicar in his spiritual capacity, every way suited to such a principal and such purposes. This Minister, Thomas Cromwell, had taken care to inform the King of his talents for destruction, and being unrestrained by any principle, human or divine, and the brutal savageness of his mind equal to his vile extraction,

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tion, he was alike qualified to plan and execute his Prince's worst designs." B. i. p. 164.

And again, " The execution of Cromwell was attended with every aggravation of guilt that can fill up the measure of wretchedness, and make the criminal feel the whole weight both of his guilt and punishment. From a birth as sordid as can debase even the dregs of the common people, he had been successively raised to the highest dignities : his Administration from the beginning had been hateful to the Commons on every account, which could make the exercise of his public station unpopular and odious ; and the Nobles had their particular reasons of aversion in seeing a Blacksmith's son set above them all ; and deemed their honours vilified, by being communicated to an Upstart. He was one of the worst of Men, and most pernicious Ministers that ever directed the Councils of a Tyrant, or oppressed a nation ; nothing was undertaken or thought on to the emolument and honour of England, during his whole Administration ; and the transactions of these ten years amount to no more than a tale of woe, which blends the Monarch's and the Minister's crimes with the nation's misery. B. i. p. 291, 293.

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There is nothing which shews the abilities of this celebrated Statesman more than the surprizing progress he made in the Reformation, by such artful means as could induce the most bigotted and strenuous Defender of the Roman Catholick Faith as ever sat upon the Throne of these Kingdoms, to remove the mightiest obstacles that impeded it, without being sensible that he contributed any thing towards it. The means he applied were the Regal Supremacy of the Church, and the suppression of the Religious Houses; the greatest benefits that could be conferred upon this Nation; for by the first its Peace was entirely restored, and the Nation was at unity in itself; and from the other, the Commerce, Wealth, and Populousness of it commenced, which have gradually risen to that amazing height which they now are; so that not only the Protestants, but the whole body of the People in all succeeding ages, are indebted to this Minister, and ought in gratitude to place him in the first rank of British Worthies.

Henry had been fully initiated in all the principles of arbitrary power, when Cromwell came to the Administration, and had too long indulged himself in the unbounded exercise

of it in all civil affairs, to need an instructor, or to brook any opposition. The fortunate circumstance of the King's quarrel with the Pope, concerning the divorce from his Queen, afforded a fair opportunity to the Leaders of the Protestants, for suggesting to him, how inconsistent it was with the nature of Government to have two independent supreme powers in the same Kingdom, which could not but foment endless distractions ; that the only way to prevent them was to have but one Sovereign, and to make the Head of the State the Head of the Church. This was so agreeable to his ruling passions, that he readily listened to it ; and though he was firmly attached to the Romish Religion, yet his pride and ambition got the ascendant of his zeal ; and he did not perceive that he was weakening that building, by pulling down the main pillar, when he substituted so great a supporter of it as himself in its room : he therefore immediately deprived the Pope of his Supremacy in these Kingdoms, and invested himself with it. The affairs of Europe were at that juncture in such a critical situation, that every State courted his alliance, and England was also within itself so equally ballanced between Protestants and Papists,

pists, that he could turn the scale to which ever side he inclined. Hence both parties were extremely solicitous of gaining him ; for which reason he met with less opposition than could be imagined ; and what rendered it still less, was the violence of his temper, which could not bear the least contradiction ; so that few, even of the most bigotted Romanists, thought it either prudent or safe openly to oppose him, and indeed it proved fatal to most of those who did. The Monks were fast friends of the Pope, and were continually inveighing against this usurpation of the King, and alienating the affections of his People from him : These provocations, together with the lure of their wealth, were generally supposed to be his principal inducements for their suppression. But the Leaders of the Reformation had other reasons : for they were sensible, that the Protestant Religion could never be effectually established while these Religious Houses continued, and therefore they prompted the King to dissolve them ; and were glad to have Cromwell appointed Visitor, to enquire into, and report the abuses of them to the King ; and though he was probably not inclined in this office to shew them much favour, yet

there is no reason to charge him with any false or unfair representations of them. Some of these abuses indeed were so very shocking, that several of the Monks, struck with the consciousness of guilt and fear of punishment, were glad to compound the affair, by a voluntary surrender of their Houses and Estates to the King, to avoid a farther disquisition : and the other being afraid to dispute the power of the Legislature, quietly submitted to the Decrees of the Parliament concerning them ; and however the Papists in general were exasperated at these proceedings, they dared not shew their resentment to the King ; but the whole weight of their displeasure fell upon his Ministers, and most especially upon Cromwell, who had been by these two new offices of Vicar and Visitor General, raised to the most conspicuous and dangerous eminence ; for the first being the highest dignity of the Church, he was entitled to a rank next to the Royal Family. This Precedency to all the Nobility excited the envy of many of them, who could not bear to see a person of so low extraction set above them : and both these posts marked him out for the peculiar object of the indignation and malice of the Papists, who at length,

length, through the influence of a Roman Catholick Queen and her Relations, prevailed over him, and triumphed in his fall. When these enemies had perswaded the King to have him committed and brought to his trial, they had no particular crimes to alledge against him, and were therefore obliged to prosecute him by a Bill of Attainder, and had him condemned without any proof or liberty of defence. Our Author violently exclaimed against this method of proceeding, in the case of the Marchioness of Exeter, and the Countess of Salisbury; and said, that it was contrary to all right, and that even the farce of justice was superseded: but the case was altered with respect to Cromwell; here it was no more than what he deserved, and his crimes, though not specified, called for the most capital punishments. There was also no one circumstance at his execution, which could justify Mr. Phillips's assertion, "that it was attended with every aggravation of guilt, that could fill up the measure of wretchedness, and make the criminal feel the whole weight both of his guilt and punishment;" for he betrayed no sign of the one, nor fear of the other. And that nothing might be omitted which could blacken his character,

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he produces a detail of a private conversation which passed between him and Pole, in Wolsey's Palace, which stands entirely upon the single testimony of Pole, who was his inveterate enemy; and if there was any such conversation, it cannot be supposed that Cromwell delivered his real sentiments in it, because it is not confirmed by his future conduct; for the Historians of those times describe him as a person of wonderful moderation, condescension, affability and gratitude; and assert, that Henry loved both Cranmer and Cromwell, and believed them to be men of solid virtue and piety; who were for preserving the essentials of Religion, though they were desirous of reforming some abuses in it; and indeed the King seemed to repent of putting this Minister to death; for he endeavoured to make what satisfaction he could to his injured family, in creating that very year his son Gregory a Peer of the Realm, by the title of Lord Cromwell.

L E T T E R XXX.

ARchbishop Cranmer acted jointly with the Earl of Essex, in carrying on the Reformation during the reign of Henry VIII. and was one of the Regents who forwarded it in Edward's minority: for which reasons Mr. Phillips hath culled from every Author whatever he thought could villify him, and by heightening it with his own colouring, and blending it with some scandals of his own raising, hath drawn a character of him, which every person of the least discernment must perceive to be the composition of a Romish Bigot, and which none but the most Priest-ridden Laymen of that Church can approve. Was a contrast to be drawn of this character, by collecting, enlarging, and adding to whatever hath been said in his praise, it would be difficult as well as troublesome for the Reader to form a true judgment of him from two such different representations. I will therefore endeavour to give a just character of this Reformer, by exhibiting his real failings, refusing, what this Author hath falsely or foolishly charged

charged him with, and fairly describing his perfections.

When Henry offered Cranmer the Archbishoprick of Canterbury, upon Wareham's death he desired to be excused from accepting it; and continued in the refusal of it for more than six months; but the King was determined, and would take no denial; and finding his principal objection was the taking the customary oath of obedience to the Pope, at the consecration, he permitted him to take it upon what conditions, and in what manner he thought proper; whereupon he made a protestation, that, by obedience to the Pope, he only meant such as was consistent with the laws of God, the statutes of the Realm, and the prerogatives of the King; that he did not intend, by this oath, to bind himself from freely speaking, consulting, and consenting to all and every thing which concerned the Reformation of the Christian Religion, and the Government of the Church of England, or from ordering or reforming those things in it, which seemed to him most proper to be reformed; and that he took this oath in this sense, and no other. This is the substance of the
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the Protestation or Explication of the oath, taken from Fuller's Church-History; where he says, that Cranmer publickly made it three several times, in the Chapter-House, before authentic witnesses, on his knees, at the High-altar, at his consecration; and also when he received his pall, at the same place. Now, if it be considered, that the King was not to be denied, when he insisted upon Cranmer's acceptance of this preferment; and that these were very natural limitations, and seemingly implied in the oath, I cannot see how he could be charged with any clandestine equivocation, or mental reservation, contrary to the plain meaning of the oath; or with what justice one of our best Historians could observe upon it, that this was by no means one of Cranmer's most commendable actions. Mr. Phillips, indeed, confidently asserts, that he retired into a private place, and entered a Protest against the oath he was going to take, and then took it; though he saw this refuted at large by Fuller, whom he quotes just afterwards upon this very charge. B. ii. p. 154.

I wish I could say as much in Cranmer's defence, concerning the execution of Joan Boucher, and George Van Parr, a German, who

suffered as Anabaptists for Heresy ; though these Sectaries were very turbulent and factious in the State, and great allowances ought to be made for the violence of the times, yet it did not become a Protestant Bishop to be concerned in such prosecutions, and the Papists indeed availed themselves mightily of it ; and though these were the only instances of persecution in this reign, and these were persons whom the Romanists would have first fell upon, yet they made as much clamour about them as if they had been Martyrs in their own Church, or if as many had been burnt in this reign as were in the next. Mr. Phillips in particular says, that the Archbishop's behaviour on this occasion was attended with an aggravation which creates horror, because he urged the King to sign the warrant ; though had Gardiner, or Bonner, or any of his Romish Bishops done the same thing against these very persons, whom they looked upon as much Hereticks as Cranmer could do, it would have created no horror, and they would have done no more, in his account, than their duty required them to do. It is to be observed farther, says this Author, these proceedings were

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carried on three years after the statutes against Hereticks were repealed. B. ii. p. 153.

The statutes against Hereticks of the fifth of Richard II. and the second of Henry V. with that of Henry VIII. commonly called the Bloody-statute, were indeed repealed by the first of Edward VI. but it doth not appear, that the famous statute *de Heretico comburendo*, passed in the second of Henry IV. was then repealed; and Rapin expressly asserts that it stood unrepealed till the year 1677. See Rapin's Hist. of the reign of Henry IV. P. 491. Folio Edition.

The sentence likewise, says Mr. Phillips, was pronounced with all the pomp in which severity and ostentation could dress it up. P. 153. That is, it was much in the same manner as was given in the preceding reign, and with a less insulting air than was generally used in the succeeding reign; but this Author's prejudice to the Archbishop sets his actions in a far different light to him, and draws such unguarded expressions from him as might be retorted upon him, and the persecutors among the Papists with infinite advantage.

Peter Martyr, the Divinity Professor at Oxford, retired in the beginning of Queen Mary's

reign to the Archbishop's Palace, to screen himself from the insults of the Papists; but finding that Cranmer was not able to protect himself, he, with some hundred Protestants, withdrew out of the Kingdom, foreseeing the impending storm; and indeed it appears, at this distance of time, a weakness in Cranmer, that he did not accompany them, and seek protection among his wife's relations, and the Lutherans abroad, that he might avoid the fury of Mary and her zealots, as Pole had before done, to get out of the reach of Henry VIII. and Becket, of Henry II. for he could not but be sensible, that as he had been the chief promoter of the Reformation in England, he was most obnoxious to the Papists: And though the Queen in Council had declared, that she would use no force upon conscience in affairs of Religion, and that none should be compelled to embrace the Catholic Religion; yet one would imagine, that he having so many years experience and observation of the temper and equivocations of the Papists, could not but know, there was no trusting to their promises; that his innocence would but inflame their malice; and that he could expect nothing but the extreme insolence and severity

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from them. It is surprizing, therefore, that he did not make a timely and prudent retreat from them.

The ductile conscience of Cranmer, says our Biographer, allowed him, in hopes of saving his life, to abjure all the tenets he had hitherto professed; and when that prospect failed, and he was brought to execution, to revoke that very abjuration, and to declare it was all a lie. B. ii. p. 157. It is acknowledged, that, in hopes of saving himself from being burnt alive, he did recant; and as the Queen had not thought proper to have him executed for giving his vote for excluding her from the throne, and the Statute *de Heretico comburendo* was only to be inflicted upon obstinate Hereticks, he flattered himself with the hopes of being delivered from this fiery trial; but he soon found his mistake, and as soon repented of what he had done; and to prove the sincerity of his repentance, he exposed his right hand, which had signed the recantation, to the flames, and held it extended in the fire till it dropped off. This is the charge against Archbishop Cranmer; and to which we shall only farther reply, that he was a human Being, and as such was subject to human frailties, and let him who

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is free from them fling the first stone : And if all his accusers who were less innocent than himself had, like those of the adulterous women mentioned in the Gospel, withdrawn themselves, he would have been left to God and his own conscience : but instead of that, they, without the least sense of their own infirmities, or compassion for his, baited him with infamous scurrilities, and dragged him to a most barbarous death : and his enemies since have continued to blacken his character with the foulest calumnies, among whom none have appeared more forward than our Author, who hath given vent to his rancour, by collecting and loading him with all kinds of scandals, some of which are absolutely false, and others only relatively bad, that is, what might give offence to a Papist, but would be approved by every Protestant and impartial person.

Dr. Fuller, says this Biographer, who has undertaken Cranmer's defence, is at a loss how to reply to any of the nine articles which Mr. Prinne lays to his charge ; most of which he gives up, and says, in a homely phrase, he will leave him where he is guilty to sink or swim by himself. B. ii. p. 158. Here I cannot but observe, that the more accurately our Author's
History

History be examined, the greater number of prevarications and falsehoods will be found in it; and he hath so little regard to truth or decency, that there is hardly a single Author, or the least passage mentioned by him, that he doth not misquote, or wrest from its meaning to a sense favourable to his own cause. Fuller hath amply refuted seven out of the nine articles that Prinne had drawn up against him; he is entirely silent upon one, and of the other he only says that he leaves him to sink or swim where he was guilty; but Mr. Phillips here insinuates, that he had said this of him in general, upon all the articles; and though Fuller, in his answer to one of them, proved that Cranmer had taken the oath of obedience to the Pope in the most public manner, and particularized the places where he took it, yet Mr. Phillips, without the least refutation or notice of it, confidently asserts, that Fuller was at a loss how to reply to any of these nine Articles, and wilfully persists in charging Cranmer with retiring into a private place, and there entering a protest against the oath.

L E T T E R XXXI.

PHILLIPS charges Cranmer with consenting to the death of Lambert and Anne Askew, who were executed for denying the Doctrine of Transubstantiation. Fuller, indeed, acknowledges this consent, but I cannot see for what reason, as it is not authenticated by any Historian that I can meet with. Henry had disputed with Lambert upon that subject, and ordered him to be burnt, or retract his opinion : and Chancellor Wriothesley prosecuted Askew and put her to the rack. It is generally said also, that he demeaned himself so low as to set his hand to the rack, and to skrew it tighter when he thought the Executioner favoured her, and then ordered her to be burnt ; but it nowhere appears that Cranmer's advice or consent was asked upon either of them.

Our Author upbraids him likewise, but without any authority, with subscribing to the six articles, commonly called the Bloody Statute. Cranmer had been Archbishop some years before it was enacted, and he argued strenuously against it for three days successively ; and when the King desired him to go out of the House of Peers, and desist from opposing it, he had the
courage

courage to say, that it was against his conscience, and he thought himself obliged to stay and vote against it. It was not likely, therefore, that he should subscribe to it.

Again, he says, his conscience, (that is Cranmer's) in a very different Sense from that of the Apostle, became all to all, and accommodated itself without distinction, to every thing.—This person, who, Proteus like, put on all appearances, was then only taken when he returned to his own form. B. ii. p. 156, 157.

He never appeared in any other form than that of a Reformer, he set out with that character, continued invariably, except in the single instance of his recantation, and died in it: When the Duke of Norfolk, Gardiner, and others, had plotted his ruin, and accused him to the King of being an Heretick, and the King charged him with it, he frankly acknowledged and avowed his principles. Henry was charmed with his sincerity, and had a real affection for him, because he was convinced that he had acted with ingenuity, and from motives of conscience, and therefore always protected him from his enemies: The Papists knew him to be what he was, and were not deceived in him; he was not taken when he returned to his own form, for he was always in it; but he was then only taken, when the Papists re-

turned to the plenitude of their power, and their spirit of persecution was armed with the sword of the Magistrate, and they could bring their plots to bear against him, which they had been contriving for more than twenty years.

Our Author's charge is admitted, that Cranmer subjected (but not enslaved) the Church to the Secular Power, and submitted its authority to earthly Potentates; that he acknowledged Henry VIII. to be supreme Head of the Church in these kingdoms, suffered Cromwell, as the King's Vicegerent, to preside at all Convocations of the Clergy; that he dissolved two of Henry's marriages, and on Edward's accession to the throne, took out fresh grants for his Archbishoprick; and that he also took to himself a wife, and accepted one of the first Sees in the Christian World: But it doth not follow from it, that he was obliged to Celibacy by the most solemn ties. How far he conformed to the Rules and Canons of the Romish Church in Henry's Reign, and when he was Archbishop, is very uncertain: But it is presumed, from his general character, that he did no more than what he could justify. These things indeed are such high crimes in the opinion of the Romanists, that I wonder how so zealous a Member of that Communion, as our Author seems to be, should represent his conscience only as spotted like
a leopard,

a leopard, and not, Æthiopian-like, blackened all over. But however he may appear to him and to his party, he will ever be honoured as a Saint and a Martyr by the Protestants, for he was at the head of the Reformation, indefatigable in the promotion of its interest, and voluntarily exposed himself for its sake to the hatred, malice, and outrages of the furious Bigots of the Romish Church: He was respected and loved by the King for his integrity, and honoured by all impartial and good men for his sanctity of manners, learning, gravity, and innumerable excellencies of mind: and as his candour, generosity, hospitality, and other moral qualities, gained him universal esteem, so his zeal for the Christian Religion, his incessant labours for restoring it to its primitive purity, and his courage in his Martyrdom, rendered him the hero of the Protestant Church.

The Duke of Somerset was a Reformer, and consequently falls under the censure of our Author, whom he characterizes in the following manner. The young Prince's uncle was invested with the whole power of the Regency: But the discontents which the changes in Religion, of which he was known to be the principal Abettor, and the insolence and rapacity, with which he exerted an almost sovereign sway, caused the people to rise up in arms in different places of the

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kingdom,

kingdom. And again, this haughty Usurper of the Royal Authority had left his nephew just as much of it as was necessary, to enable himself to exert it to its full extent ; whom I cannot dismiss without observing that an administration only of a few years was long enough to make the nation experience that woe which is denounced against a land whose King is a child, and whose Nobles are luxurious : B. i. p. 447, 448. As this charge is founded upon no facts, or upon facts which will not support it, such as the building of Somerset house upon the ruins of Religious houses, and the prosecution of his brother, I shall make no other reply than by opposing to it the character which is given of him by Fuller, and other reputable Historians.

The Duke of Somerset, says he, was religious, and a lover of all such as were so ; a great promoter of the Reformation, valiant, and beloved of martial men. Fuller's Church Hist. B. vii. Sec. 45.

He lost his life for a small crime, and that upon a nice Point subtly devised, and packed by his enemies. Cambden's Brit. in Somersetshire.

To which it will be sufficient to add, what Rapin hath extracted from Burnet, Dugdale, and Heylin concerning him, viz. He was humble, affable, civil, courteous, and guided in all the transactions

transactions of his life, by the principles of honour, virtue, and religion ; in a word, he had many noble qualities, and few faults ; he always shewed a very great zeal for the Reformation ; and to him and Cranmer is properly due the glory of every thing that was done in favour of Religion during the reign of Edward VI. Rapin's Hist. vol. ii. fol. edit. p. 14.

The last character that I shall examine, and with which I shall conclude these Remarks upon the History of the Life of Cardinal Pole, will be of Ann Bullen, the Mother of Queen Elizabeth.

Ann Bullen, says our Author, had been educated at the Court of France, which was then a school of gallantry, and had returned to England a great proficient in it — She had imbibed the doctrine of Calvin ; and the Broachers of those Novelties had found no readier method of spreading them, than by insinuating themselves into the good opinion of the Ladies about the Court : But on her coming to England, she secretly favoured the tenets of Luther, and indeed the latitude which the Patriarch of that sect allowed his followers, could not but appear very commodious to the general tenor of her life. As ambition was her ruling, though not her only passion, that had scarcely gained its end, when other inclinations, of a less spiritual nature, began to solicit their proper gratification,
and

and make her overlook the dangers with which she was threatened from his temper, who had put away a lawful wife to make room for her. Some writers have asserted, that like Agrippina, who provoked her own son to incest, with a view to secure her power, when she perceived the unweildy habit of the King's body to be but ill suited to his impatience of having a male heir, she judged her brother's vigour most proper to secure this tie of her husband's affections, without any risk of discovery.

Her fate was considered not merely as a punishment, but as a divine judgment, when she finished a life of levity, error, and lewdness. B. i. p. 123, 124. And in his note upon this last sentence he says, that Stowe, Fuller, Burnet, Collier, Echard, and our Historians in general seem to agree in this character of Ann Bullen. Sanders adds more and Gratiani confirms all.

It is indeed universally agreed, that Ann Bullen favoured the Reformers: but every one of these authors whom this Biographer hath the audacity to produce against her, vindicate her moral character, with respect to the crimes here laid to her charge, except the two Roman Catholick writers, Sanders and Gratiani; the first of whom is so notoriously scandalous, that I wonder Phillips himself is not ashamed to mention him. The King had conceived a violent passion for Jane Seymour, a
Maid

Maid of Honour to the Queen, and from thence was prepared to listen to the base insinuations of Lady Rochford, who hated her Husband, and had a most infamous character. This wicked woman whispered into the King's ear, that his Queen was unfaithful to him, and had a criminal converse with her Husband, the Lord Rochford, though he was the Queen's brother. The King being inclined to believe these suggestions, the Queen's enemies, on account of Religion, finding it a favourable opportunity, backed this charge, with accusing her of several intrigues with her domesticks. The King's passion for his new mistress enflamed his jealousy, which burnt with unextinguishable fury. Four persons, besides Lord Rochford, were apprehended, convicted, and executed, without any proof or evidence, for criminal familiarities with the Queen : All of them protested their innocence, only Smeton said he had well deserved to die, which gave occasion to many reflections ; but it was generally said, and as generally believed, that he was bribed to say thus much ; and had his life promised him ; but he was never brought to confront the Queen upon her trial, for it was feared he would retract what he had said ; and therefore he was executed lest he should tell tales. Burnet, vol. i. p. 201. vol. iii. p. 120. and Rapin, vol. i. Folio, p. 810.

The King married Jane Seymour the day after the Queen's death, which plainly shewed his eagerness to get rid of Ann Bullen ; and what confirmed the world still more in the belief of her innocence was, the fatal end of Lady Rochford, her principal accuser, who was condemned and executed for introducing one Culpeper into Queen Catharine's bed-chamber, and being an accomplice of her lewd practices.

I will close this head with the short character of Ann Bullen, taken from Fuller, one of the Historians, who Mr. Phillips says agree with him in his description of her ; viz. She was accomplished with an acceptable behaviour to all qualities and conditions of people : She was a great patroness of the Protestants ; protector of the persecuted ; preferer of men of merit ; a bountiful reliever of the Poor ; and the happy mother of Queen Elizabeth. Fuller's Church History, B. v. Sec. 20.

T H E E N D.





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